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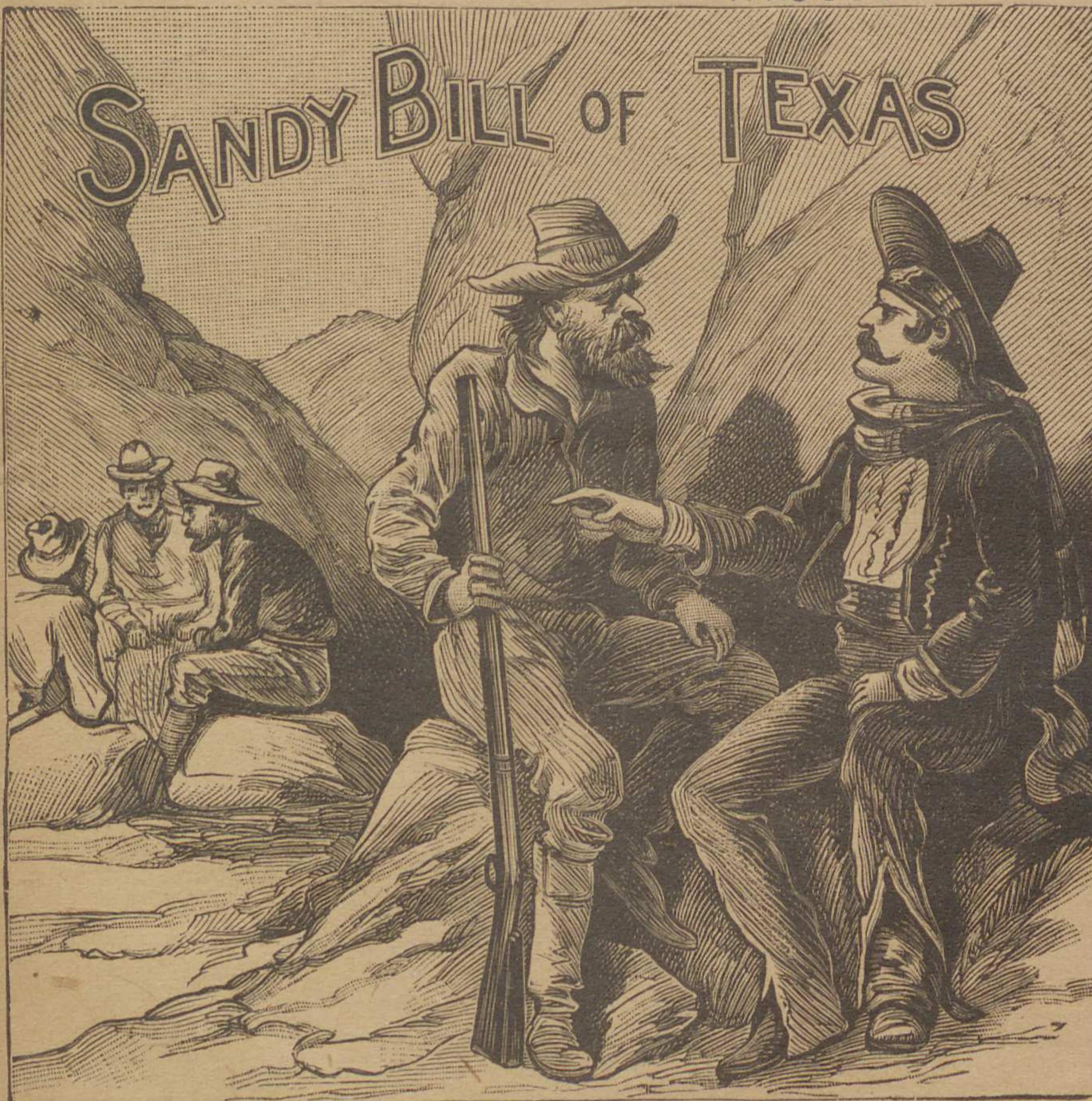
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WILLET



"WHAT DO YOU WANT, OLD HOSS?"

Sandy Bill, of Texas;

OR,

THE WHITE APACHE'S DOOM.

BY EDWARD WILLETT,
AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE WOLF," "BILL ROB-
BINS, HUNTER," "SILVERSPUR," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

SANDY BILL'S CAPTIVE.

AT the foot of a deep canyon, that sloped down abruptly from a broad basaltic plateau, hardly a thousand yards from the river San Juan, was encamped a party of a dozen men.

On each side of the canyon the rocky walls towered up to the height of more than two hundred feet, inclining inward, and almost meeting at the top. At the rear of the canyon, the chute was so abrupt that it could not be mounted by either man or mule. At the foot of the chute bubbled up a small spring of clear and cool water. The mouth of the canyon was blockaded by two army wagons. Between the rocks and the river was a good growth of grass, on which a number of horses and mules were quietly feeding; while the men, within the canyon, were smoking meditative pipes, after a good dinner.

The chief person of the party, from his position, was a young man dressed in the fatigue uniform of a United States officer. This was Lieutenant Charles Collins, of the infantry, a tall and broad-shouldered fellow—handsome but sun-burned and travel-stained.

He had in charge the two wagons that blocked the mouth of the canyon, and his immediate command consisted of four soldiers and two teamsters. To these had been added, partly by hire and partly by chance, two Texas Rangers, two trappers from the South Park, and a Shawnee Indian.

Besides these, there was a Spaniard, or a Mexican who called himself a Spaniard, who had partly joined them, partly been captured by them, during the previous day's march. His name, he said, was Manuel Gutierrez, and he was no Mexican but a Gachupin—a Spaniard by blood and birth. He was partly a guest, partly a prisoner; he knew that it would not be worth while to attempt to escape, and he had no present desire to do so. Thus he sat apart from the others, looking sullen and sulky, as if his feelings were akin to those of a cat in a strange garret.

The party was a strong one, and in a strong position. They had plenty of meat and plenty of good water, and there was plenty of food for their animals as long as they might range unmolested between the bluffs and the river. But our party had no intention of making a long stay in that position. They had merely stopped to rest and recruit their stock, after an exhaustive journey, and expected to take up the line of march the next morning.

One of the party, who had been absent, came in before the others had finished their meditative smoke—a tall, brawny, wolfish-

looking man—leading a young Indian, whom he grasped tightly by both wrists with one of his big hands.

Lieutenant Collins rose from his seat, emptied his pipe, replaced it in his pocket, and stared at the new-comers in some surprise.

"What is the matter now, Bill?" he asked.

"Where did you get this red-skin?"

"Found him down yar by the river. He war a-huntin' roots and sech—no hoss, no gun. Kinder weakened down, I allow, and I catched him as easy as you could snake a Digger down-hill. He's my meat, *he* is."

The young Indian raised a pair of large black eyes, and looked appealingly at Collins. He was a fine specimen of his race, although his womanly features and his slender frame, emaciated by long fasting, did not betoken great strength or endurance. He was dressed in a peculiar garb, wearing Mexican calzoneros, bright with buttons and gaudy with lace. His upper clothing was a finely-wrought buckskin hunting-shirt, girded around his waist with a scarlet silken sash. Over this was a waterproof Moqui blanket, durable in its texture and bright in its colors. Moccasins protected his feet, but his head had no covering. His long black hair flowed down upon his shoulders, with the exception of the scalp-lock, which was fancifully confined by a bunch of scarlet ribbons. He had no arms, his knife having been taken from him by Sandy Bill, his captor.

Collins perceived at a glance that this Indian did not belong to any of the wild tribes, but to the half-civilized race known as Pueblo Indians. There was something in the appearance of the youth, besides his appealing glance, that at once enlisted the sympathies of the officer, and he felt strongly inclined to deliver him from the tender mercies of Sandy Bill.

"What do you mean, Bill?" he asked. "I hope you are not thinking of killing the boy."

"Don't you bet too high on that, cap'n. He's my meat, I say, and I reckon I'll w'ar him out right smartly afore I'm done with him."

"What have you against him? How has he harmed you?"

"I've got suthin' ag'in' his color gin'rally and particelarly. Whenever and wharever I see an Injun, and there's a chance to go fur his sculp, I go fur it."

"But this is not an Apache or a Comanche, or even a Navajo. He is one of the Pueblo Indians, and they are peaceable."

"Do you reckon that I don't know what he is? I hain't lived nineteen year in these parts fur nothin'. Peaceable, are they? You may think so, cap'n; but you'd better not trust 'em too far. I mean to make sure that this chap will be peaceable."

"Look at me, Sandy Bill, and don't keep twitching your eyes to all points of the compass. Look me in the face, if you can, for a minute or two."

The Texan desperado did look at the officer once, but he could not stand the calm, steady gaze of authority that met his look, and his eyes again wandered. Naturally slippery, sneaking and cruel, though cool and daring enough, he knew that he could not look an honest man in the face, and he seldom attempted to do so.

"I hired you, Sandy Bill," continued Collins, "to make the trip to Santa Fe. When I engaged you, you came under my control, the same as every man in my command. I have no wish to order you. I hope you will obey me when I speak to you kindly. If you do not, I shall be obliged to use my authority."

"Authority be blowed!" growled the Texan. "Do you reckon that I allowed to sell my body and soul fur forty dollars a month? I ain't a nigger and I ain't a sojer—not by a big chance. I'm a free white man, I am. I'll do the fa'r thing by you, cap'n, as I agreed to; but I hain't sold my principles, and one of them is to go fur a red-skin's sculp whenever I see a chance to git it."

"Your talk is very free; but words don't trouble me. I must tell you plainly, Bill, that I will not allow you to kill that Indian. There must be no murder done in this camp."

"The deuce you won't! We'll see about that now, mighty sudden. Come here, you young copper-colored cuss, till I give you a genteel chokin'."

The ruffian's right hand tightened its grasp upon the Indian's wrists, and his left clutched him by the throat. In an instant the prisoner's tongue was out of his mouth, and his eyes seemed to be starting from their sockets.

One step, and Collins's long right arm was stretched out, and his hand seized the collar of the Texan's tough hunting-shirt. One jerk, and the desperado was slung out into the middle of the canyon, where he staggered for a moment, and then fell. His surprise at the act, as much as the act itself, had thrown him off his balance.

With a muttered curse he sprung to his feet, and his quick hand sought his knife; but there stood Collins, calm and inexorable as fate, confronting him with a loaded six-shooter.

"You may as well drop this thing, Bill," said the lieutenant. "You see that I hold the ace."

"You had the fu'st draw, cap'n, and you've got a full. I reckon I'd better pass out."

"Understand me, Bill Sanders, or Sandy Bill, or whatever name you may choose to be known by. I merely wish you to remember that I command this party, and that I must be obeyed. I have no objection to your killing as many Apaches as you wish to kill, but I cannot allow you to drag in here an unoffending and harmless Indian, and murder him in cold blood. Is that plain?"

"Plain as a silver sight on a short-bar'led rifle. It's all right, cap'n. You've got me on this whirl, and the little skunk kin go along, fur all me. I ort to hav wiped him out whar I cotched him."

"You give him up to me, do you?"

"Yaas; but I reckon, cap'n, ef your old dad had been treated as mine was, you wouldn't show much marcy to any copper-skin."

"What did they do to your father?"

"Half-roasted him, and then cut him into giblets—that's about all."

The cool and indifferent manner in which the man spoke of his father's torture was as horrible to Collins as the thought of the torture itself, and he turned away with a shudder.

Sandy Bill also turned away, apparently resigned to the exercise of the officer's authority,

but his face had lost none of its wolfish look. The other Texan, the trappers and the Shawnee, had shown little, if any interest in the affair, and were still quietly smoking their pipes. The soldiers, who had seized their guns and had stood in readiness to defend their commander, now laid them aside, and tried to look as if nothing had happened. Gutierrez, who had taken in the little scene with an eager, almost savage glance, sunk back into his nook when it was ended, muttering something to himself in Spanish.

The Indian youth had gone to Collins's side as soon as he was released from the grasp of Sandy Bill, and was gazing at him with an expression of thankfulness and devotion.

"This fellow is nearly starved," said the officer, perceiving the Indian as he turned away from Sandy Bill. "Is there anything left in the kettle, boys?"

He stepped to the remnant of fire, and looked into the still simmering kettle.

"There is plenty. Come, red-skin—you seem to understand English—help yourself, and make up for lost time. Bill, you have missed your dinner; come and get a snack."

"Reckon I don't want any, cap'n. Don't feel wolfish just now."

He looked wolfish enough, though, and Collins felt that he had made a mistake in asking him to eat with his late enemy.

The young Indian seated himself on the ground, drew the kettle to him, and made the savory stew disappear with marvelous rapidity. Yet he seemed to struggle between a sense of propriety and good manners, and the gnawing, ravenous hunger that was preying upon his vitals. Collins, who had had considerable experience among the wild tribes of the plains, was sure that he had never known an Indian, under similar circumstances, to control himself so well, and he mentally set down this Pueblo as something superior to the common herd of copper-skins.

In the quantity of his food, as well as in his manner of eating it, he also showed self-control. A man who has been on the verge of starvation may easily kill himself by over-eating; but this Indian was determined not to die in that way. Collins knew that he left the kettle before he had satisfied his hunger, for he sighed, and looked wistfully at the stew, as he turned away.

Hardly had he finished his repast, when the rapid galloping of a horse was heard, and the cry of danger arose.

"Apaches!" shouted Sandy Bill, as he seized his rifle and hastened to the mouth of the canyon.

CHAPTER II.

THE HUNTED QUEEN.

At the cry of "Apaches!" Collins also sprung to the mouth of the canyon, getting out into "the open" simultaneously with Sandy Bill. Both looked up the river, and saw a single horse tearing toward them at headlong speed; but its rider was no Indian.

"Nary 'Pash, by old San Jacinto!" growled the Texan, as he brought the butt of his rifle savagely down upon the ground.

It was, in fact, something far different from an Apache that came flying toward them. They

saw the flutter of a riding-skirt, and soon distinguished the chip hat and blooming features of a white girl.

Collins was silent, stupefied by astonishment, and Sandy Bill was still muttering his disappointment at not having encountered an Apache. All the rest of the party, with the exception of Gutierrez and the Indian, were collected at the mouth of the canyon, with their weapons ready for use.

In a few minutes the girl reached them, and with difficulty reined in her foaming and panting horse. Collins, suddenly recovering his presence of mind, stepped forward and assisted her to alight; but his senses nearly deserted him again as he looked at her closely.

Incedit regina! If she did not walk like a queen, she certainly rode as a queen ought to ride, and she looked as a queen ought to look, when she sprung from her saddle to the ground, hardly touching the hand which the bewildered lieutenant held out to her. She was beautiful—strikingly beautiful, with her large dark eyes, her masses of black hair, her full red lips, and her complexion, which had just enough of the brunette in it to give it a flavor, and impart a tinge without which it would not have been perfect. She was attired in well-fitting garments, the material of which, if not costly, was much finer than anything that Collins and his companions had lately seen. She was much excited but showed not the least sign of fear.

"Where did you come from?" eagerly asked the officer. "Are you pursued?"

"I have been pursued," she answered, and her voice was so rich and melodious that it thrilled through Collins's whole being; "but I left my pursuers far behind. I am afraid I have nearly killed my horse."

"He has had a hard run, no doubt; but he shall be well attended to. Were they Indians who pursued you?"

"Apaches, I believe."

"They will follow the trail, and will soon be here, no doubt. Williams, take this horse into the canyon, and do the best you can for him. Permit me, Miss—"

"De Manville is my name—Emilie De Manville."

"Permit me, Miss De Manville, to lead you to our camp, where you will be perfectly safe."

Collins led the young lady into the canyon, where he hurriedly made her comfortable, and as hurriedly excused himself, being obliged to look after the safety of his command and of the property intrusted to his care.

He directed the soldiers and teamsters to move one of the wagons out of the way, and to bring in the mules and horses as speedily as possible. The rest of the party, in the mean time, busied themselves with looking after their weapons and recruiting their supplies of ammunition.

When the animals were safe, the wagon was moved back to its place, and all available boxes and bales were piled within, as an additional barricade.

This business finished, he was accosted by the Indian youth, who looked in his face confidently, as if recognizing in him a real friend.

"Give me a gun," he said, "and let me fight the Apaches. I can shoot well."

"You can? And would you shoot an Apache?"

"Coroa has killed Apaches."

"Your name is Coroa, then? Well, Coroa, take this tool, and let me see how you handle it. Don't shoot, as the Apaches may be near, and we must not alarm them."

Collins handed the youth his rifle, which Coroa brought quickly to his shoulder, and ran his eye along the barrel like a practiced hunter.

"That will do," said the officer. "I see that you are no greenhorn. You shall have a gun, my lad."

He took a spare rifle from a wagon, and gave it to Coroa, together with a flask of powder, a pouch of bullets, and a box of percussion caps. Sandy Bill, who had watched this proceeding with a grim sneer, stepped up and handed the youth the knife which he had taken from him. Collins raised his searching gray eyes, and observed the satirical glance that accompanied this act; but he was not a man to be discomposed by trifles.

"You know how to handle firearms," he said, as Coroa proceeded to load and cap his rifle. "I trust you, and have no fear that you will betray me."

"Coroa will fight for *you*," replied the Indian, with a look of devotion that spoke better than words.

Again a galloping was heard, not of one, but of many horses, and Collins sent Blue Jim, the Shawnee guide, to the mouth of the canyon, to notice the approach of the enemy. The Shawnee presently reported that they were Apaches, about fifty in number, and that they were coming down the river pretty rapidly. He was directed to continue watching them, but to keep himself carefully concealed, as the object was to draw the Apaches into a trap.

Collins then posted the men behind the barricade, with instructions not to fire a shot until he should give the word.

As Blue Jim had reported, the savages were following Emilie's trail quite rapidly, and they were soon so near to the canyon that their voices could be plainly heard. When they reached the spot where the mules and horses had been feeding, they were surprised and puzzled by the multitude of tracks. Some dismounted, and found the tracks of men among those of the horses and mules. Then there was a halt, with much jabbering and gesticulation.

The wagons were so far within the mouth of the canyon, that they were not visible, except from a point directly opposite them; but the Apaches had good reason to believe that enemies were near, and they proceeded slowly and with great circumspection. As they approached, Blue Jim came inside the barricade.

Most of the Apaches were opposite the mouth of the canyon when they suddenly discovered the wagons. They uttered a simultaneous grunt of disapprobation and alarm, and halted for a moment, uncertain what to do.

That moment of hesitation was fatal to several of them.

"Aim close—fire!" said Collins, in his usual calm and deep tones, and a rattling volley flashed out from behind the barricade.

There was no answering volley, nor was there any necessity or opportunity for another dis-

charge from the barricade. The Apaches wheeled as quick as thought, and scampered off as rapidly as their horses could carry them.

The volley from the breastwork had been quite destructive. Four Apaches had been killed outright, and three badly wounded. These last three were put out of their pain, and all the bodies of the Indians were dragged to the river and consigned to its turbid current by the two Texans and the trappers, who appeared to take a grim delight in thus getting rid of them. The dead horses were disposed of in the same way.

The Apaches remained where they had halted—angry enough, no doubt, but showing no disposition to venture again within the range of those dreaded-rifles. When the clearing of the field was finished, they rode away toward the north.

As Collins, who had been watching them, turned to re-enter the canyon, he was startled by a scream—a woman's scream—expressive of anger and distress, but not of fright. He knew that the scream could have been uttered by none but Emilie de Manville, and he sprung into the inclosure, with his eyes and heart on flame.

He had left her seated, and he found her standing, with one foot advanced, and one hand raised and clinched. Her cheeks and eyes were in a blaze, and her whole attitude and appearance spoke of passion, of detestation, of abhorrence.

Before her crouched Manuel Gutierrez, who was menaced by the lad Coroa, with leveled rifle. The Spaniard's face was absolutely black with the mingled emotions that found expression there, with wild desire and longing, half-conquered by extreme rage and shame.

Collins at once struck up the Indian's rifle, and the Spaniard slunk back to his nook, where he withdrew himself into the depths of his sulkiness.

"What does this mean, Miss De Manville?" asked the officer. "Have you been insulted?"

"I cannot remain where that man is," replied Emilie, bursting into tears. "Let me go and find my father."

"What does this mean, sir?" asked Collins again, turning to the Spaniard. "Have you insulted this lady?"

"I have insulted no one," sullenly replied Gutierrez. "I have spoken to her. Is there any harm in that?"

Collins turned to Emilie for a further explanation.

"Listen to me, sir," she said, opening upon him her full battery of large dark eyes, which her tears rendered yet larger and more luminous. "I believed that I had found a friend in you."

"And you have. I would give my life to serve you. There is nothing a man can do, consistent with honor or duty, that I would not do to serve you."

"You need not fear that I would ever ask you to abandon honor or duty. I only ask your protection against that man. We were living in California—my father and I—where this man often persecuted me with his hateful addresses. When war was declared, the Mexican authorities instituted the severest measures against the American citizens. Confiscations,

imprisonment, and murder became common. Again he forced himself upon me, and I did not dare, for my father's sake, to repulse him, as I wished to. Then I learned that he had formed a plan, by which we were to be arrested and separated, so that I should be forced to become his bride. Father and I, with two servants who were faithful to us, and a few Americans, resolved to fly the country, and make our way to the States. We have passed over trackless deserts, have suffered from hunger and thirst, have run the gantlet of savage and hostile tribes, and have come thus far on our way, only to be met by that man, who has followed us without doubt, and for no good purpose. The sight of him is hateful to me, and I am in continual fear when I am near him."

Collins looked at the Spaniard as if he could eat him; but it was not in his nature to harm or abuse a prisoner, and he applied himself to soothing the excited girl.

"You have no cause to be alarmed," he said. "That man is a prisoner, and he cannot harm you while you are here. If he has done or threatened wrong to American citizens, he must answer for it at Santa Fe, whither I expect to take him."

Gutierrez arose and approached the officer, and the change in his appearance was marvelous. No longer sullen and morose, his countenance was wreathed in smiles, and his stately attitude and lofty air made him seem, what he claimed to be, a gentleman of old Spain. Emilie, notwithstanding the alteration in his demeanor, shuddered as he came near her.

"I must confess a crime," he said, placing his hand upon his heart, and bowing in courtly style, "which this brave American officer, I think, would hardly call a crime. It is true that I have made this young lady an offer of my heart and hand and fortune. Is there anything presumptuous in that? I am a gentleman of Castile, of good birth and position, and of large estates. It is true that my offer has been refused, and that I have repeated it. Was it not natural that I should do so? Could I look upon such beauty without desiring to possess it? Is it to be supposed I could easily abandon the pursuit? As for a plot to persecute the young lady and her father, and to force her inclinations—vaya!—I cannot dispute the word of a lady; but such actions are beneath the dignity and honor of a gentleman of Castile. At present, I have spoken to her to offer her my services, to console her, if I could do nothing more: but I did not think that I would provoke a tempest of rage. I can only hope that my unintentioned sin may be forgiven."

This was putting quite a different face upon the matter. Collins was strongly inclined to compassionate this luckless lover, and so believe that Emilie might be a little willful and capricious.

"We will not discuss the question just now," he said. "You perceive that your presence, whatever the cause may be, is distasteful to the lady. As a gentleman, I presume that you will not inflict it upon her any more than may be absolutely necessary."

Gutierrez, with his hand upon his heart, bowed low and gracefully, and retired to his nook.

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CHAPTER III.

LOVE AND WAR.

WHEN the Spaniard had gone, Collins also perceived a change in Emilie. Her manner toward him had become quite cool, and she answered his ardent words and assurances of sympathy and service with monosyllables or little curt replies.

He was hurt by this treatment, and, with his accustomed frankness, asked her plainly what he had done to offend her.

"You have not offended me," she replied; "but you have grieved me. I do not know why it was; but I believed that I had found a friend in whom I could trust. I knew that you were strong, brave and manly, and I had no doubt that you were just, generous and true. You have permitted yourself to be deceived by that villainous Mexican—for he is no Spaniard—and he has turned you against me."

"Indeed, Miss de Manville—"

"Please let me say my say. You imagine that I am a spoiled child, and that I have been angry with that man through mere pettishness and caprice."

Collins fairly blushed—the girl had read his thoughts so plainly.

"But you are greatly mistaken," she continued. "You have seen that man in the light of a detected and sneaking rascal, and you have seen him in the light of a Mexican who attempts to imitate the air and manners of a Spanish grandee. I know him better than you do, and I have good reason for my aversion. I believe him to be capable of any meanness or treachery, and I fear him as I would a poisonous reptile."

"Believe me, Miss de Manville, when I assure you that he shall not be permitted to annoy you any more. I have not doubted that you had good cause to dislike him, although I must confess that his extreme politeness and his apparent sincerity imposed upon me for a moment. If he troubles you again, I will give him a lesson that he will not easily forget. You speak of your father as an American citizen; but the name is French."

"He was born in France, and I am a Creole of Louisiana. We had lived five years in California when the troubles commenced. Although we have been in a foreign country, we have always claimed to be citizens of the United States."

"How was it that you were separated from your party?"

"I rode out from camp to a high plateau, hoping to get a view of the river. When I set out to return, I discovered that there were Indians between me and the camp. I made a circuit, hoping to pass around them without being observed; but they saw me, and gave chase. I could not get to the camp, and endeavored to escape in the only direction that was open to me; but I would have been in a sad predicament if I had not run upon your party."

"Your father is greatly troubled, no doubt, by your disappearance."

"Troubled! He must be distracted. I am his only child, and he dotes upon me. He will search for me, without regard to danger or delay. I must go to meet him, if it is possible to do so, and in this I must ask your assistance."

"You may command it to any extent. There is nothing that I would not do to assist you. My life, and all I have and own, are entirely at your service."

Emilie raised her eyes, and they met those of the young officer. As the earnest gray eyes and the large dark orbs looked into each other, the glance was a revelation to both the young people. If it was not a case of love at first sight, it was a case of mutual sympathy, admiration and trust. Emilie, who had grown up from childhood among the tawny natives, and the few rough Americans of California, had never seen anything like this handsome and stalwart young officer. Collins, whose later years had been passed at frontier posts and on the plains, had not supposed that there could be so many lovable qualities in a woman as seemed to center in this beautiful Creole.

Emilie blushed, and dropped her eyes. Collins felt his face flush, and withdrew his ardent gaze.

"You will probably be able to give me the direction of the last camp," he said, in his usual calm and deliberate tones, "and I will take some men and search for your father's party as soon as it is possible to do so. But nothing can be done before morning. It is now nearly night, and daylight is absolutely necessary for finding or following a trail."

"I am well aware of that, and I do not expect you to perform impossibilities. I trust in you implicitly, and fully believe that you will do all in your power to aid me. I feel as if I had been acquainted with you for years, and yet I do not even know your name."

"My name is Charles Collins."

"Then I must call you Charles. I had a brother who was named Charles, and I loved him even more than I loved my father. Will you be my brother Charles?"

"I will be anything you wish me to be," eagerly replied the young man, as his eyes again met hers. "But, if you call me Charles, I must call you Emilie."

"I wish you would."

This pleasant interchange of confidence might have gone on much further, to the great annoyance and tantalization of Gutierrez, who sat gloomily in his nook, moodily guessing at what was going on; but it was destined to be rudely interrupted.

Part of the men were engaged in the important business of cooking supper, and the others, with the exception of the sentinels, were anxiously watching the operation, when all suddenly sprung to their feet, as the sound of musketry was borne to their ears on the wind that swept down the river.

Collins was also starting up, when Emilie seized his hand in both of hers, and detained him with a firm grasp. Her agitation was such, that he could not have torn himself away from her, whatever the emergency might have been.

"It's my father," she said, in broken and unnatural tones. "He has been attacked by the Apaches. He has but five men, and all will be murdered. Can you do anything to help him? For God's sake, say yes! For my sake, will you try?"

"You may be sure that I will do my best, without the least delay. Bob Nocks!"

A tall and weather-bronzed trapper came to him.

"How many of those Apaches do you suppose we left?" asked Collins.

"Some forty or so, I reckon. But they warn't all, cap'n."

"How do you know that?"

"Thar warn't no chief of any account among 'em. They war on'y a party a-chasing of the gal. Thar's plenty more of 'em somewhar about."

"They are attacking a weak camp a little way up the river. We must go and fight them."

"All right, cap'n. Bob Nocks is allers on hand when it comes to a skrimmage."

Collins made his arrangements quickly, but judiciously. He left the two teamsters and the two Texans to guard the camp in the canyon. It was absolutely necessary to protect the Government property that was under his charge, and he was not ashamed to confess to himself that he was a little suspicious of Sandy Bill and his "pard," deeming it not beyond a possibility that they might shoot him, in the course of a sharp fight, after the affair of Coroa.

The Indian had begged to be allowed to make one of the party, and his request was granted, as much to get him away from Sandy Bill as for any other reason. Emilie also wished to go; but her petition was positively and firmly denied.

Collins's expedition thus consisted of nine men, including himself; but all, counting Coroa, were skillful, brave, and resolute, and each considered himself a match for at least five Apaches.

As the officer was about to mount his horse, he received a pressure of the hand and a look from Emilie, which sent the blood dancing through his veins, and made him oblivious of all danger.

In a few minutes the party were mounted, and set out at a gallop over the reach of turf that bordered the river. When they were near enough to the beleaguered camp to plainly hear the shouts of the combatants, they slackened their speed. Turning to the left, they ascended an eminence, from which they hoped to gain a view of the scene of action.

A strong wind was blowing from the north, and a half-moon, struggling with the broken and scattered masses of flying clouds, every now and then gave them light enough to enable them to determine the nature of the ground, and to judge of the force of their enemies.

On another eminence, about a quarter of a mile from where they had halted, was what they supposed to be De Manville's camp. On the east and west it was protected by canyons, and at the rear was a steep cliff. In front was a slope, pretty steep, but not very rough, and practicable for horsemen. The position was admirably chosen. If it had not been, the little force in the camp could not have withstood the first rush of their savage foes.

The Apaches were numerous. Those in sight were guessed by Blue Jim at a hundred or more, and there were probably others in hiding. The shouting had ceased, and the firing had ceased. There was the lull in the storm which usually precedes a heavier stroke of tempest. The In-

dians, out of reach of the rifles of the camp, were evidently preparing for a grand assault. Bodies of them were massing in front of the camp, while others, on each flank, acting as skirmishers, were slowly working their way up the hill, crawling, creeping, and availing themselves of all possible cover.

Between Collins's party and the Apaches was one of those canyons, or gorges, with which the entire country was seamed; but it could be turned by riding a short distance to the left.

Such was the position of affairs; and it could not be doubted, from the manner in which the Apaches were getting to work, that another rush would carry the camp.

CHAPTER IV.

A DESP'RIT CHANCE.

LIEUTENANT COLLINS, as soon as he looked over the field, had made himself master of the situation, and had settled upon the course that he meant to pursue. But he thought it proper, before acting, to consult Bob Nocks, the tall trapper, whom he had long trusted as his firmest friend and most sagacious adviser.

"We have no time for talk, Bob," he said. "What had we better do?"

"You mean to fight 'em, cap'n, in coarse?"

"Of course, I do. We can't allow white men to be murdered by those scoundrelly Apaches, while there is a chance to help them."

"It's my opunyon, then, that we ort to hide our hosses at the head of that thar canyon, and sneak up and pour it into the critters from behind, just as they git the fu'st volley from the camp. That'll startle 'em some, I allow, and give the chaps up yonder a chance."

"But they might turn upon us, and they could easily whip us in the open. Or, the foremost men might keep on, and get into the camp, without bothering themselves about us, and then we would be nowhere. I have always followed your advice in such matters, Bob, and it has always been good advice; but this time, old fellow, I mean to follow my own head. We will charge upon them, just when they are ready to start up the hill, and will scatter them, cut our way through them, and get into the camp."

"It's a desp'rit chance, cap'n; but desp'rit chances are sometimes the best. Thar's the canyon in our way."

"We can easily flank it, by riding around the head of it."

"Yaas—ef the red-skins don't see us."

"We must choose our time. Do you see that big black cloud, driving south'ard? In a few minutes that will hide the moon, and then it will be dark enough for our purpose. We can head off the canyon and get in position, before the moon comes out."

By the time Collins had explained his plan to the men, the black cloud had come over the moon, and the darkness, as he had said it would be, was sufficient for his purpose.

Silently and carefully the men picked their way over the rugged plateau, guiding their horses so that they should make as little noise as possible. Their object was aided by the darkness, and still more by the preoccupation of the savages, who were so intent upon their own de-

signs, that they gave no thought to what might be going on in their rear.

The position gained without discovery, our party halted and awaited the reappearance of the moon. The Apaches, most of whom were dismounted, were waiting for a little more light.

Presently the moon broke forth from the bondage of the big cloud, and shed a flood of soft radiance over the wild scene. The war-cry of the Apaches arose, shrill, fierce and pitiless, and the half-naked savages began to swarm up the slope, while those within the camp, evidently prepared for the worst, reserved their fire until they could make it sure and deadly.

Collins gave the order to charge, and the horsemen dashed at full speed across the narrow plateau, and up the slope which the Indians were ascending. As they came within easy range, they poured a volley from their rifles into the backs of the Apaches, and then, drawing their revolvers, spurred their horses into the mass.

An Apache, like a Comanche, is a very poor warrior when he is separated from his horse. Mounted, he is a fine-looking animal, a veritable centaur, active, brave, self-confident, and a formidable foe. Dismounted, he is inclined to be bow-legged, awkward and timorous.

These Apaches had tried the experiment of leaving their horses behind, that they might be less exposed to the fire of the white men as they ascended the slope. It was not to be wondered at that they were thrown into a panic, when they were attacked from an unexpected quarter and by mounted men.

Collins's band burst through them like a whirlwind, with a real American hurrah, firing their pistols right and left, and were more than half-way to the camp before the savages recovered from their consternation. Some of them at once entered the fortified inclosure, and were received with shouts of welcome by their friends; but all were not destined to get off so easily. The flanking Apaches, who were further up the slope than the main body, sent in a well-aimed and vicious flight of arrows, and their horsemen rode up to intercept and overtake the bold intruders.

The lieutenant, unhurt, and all the chambers of his revolver emptied, was riding leisurely toward the camp, when he heard a cry behind him. Turning, he saw Coroa, upon whom a mounted Apache had charged with his lance. The head of the weapon had caught in the youth's tough Moqui blanket, and he had been borne to the ground, but not otherwise injured. The Apache, without attempting to disengage the lance, was fitting an arrow to his bow for the purpose of making an end of Coroa, when Collins, giving his horse the spur, bounded forward and put an end to his operations, by splitting open his skull with a saber-stroke.

In an instant the youth was on his feet, seized his rifle, and jumped up behind the officer, who rode into camp, where he discovered that an arrow was sticking into the fleshy part of his thigh. Coroa had already perceived the arrow, and, as soon as the officer dismounted, he drew it out, and examined the point closely.

"It was not poisoned!" he exclaimed, with a

deep thankfulness in his voice and look, for which Collins could not have accounted if he had not known the Apaches often dip the points of their arrows in a deadly poison. He then knew that he had escaped a great peril.

While Coroa was binding up the wound, the officer was greeted by Mr. De Manville, a gray-headed and noble-looking man, who naturally recalled to his memory the First Empire.

"You have been our salvation!" exclaimed the old Frenchman. "Without you we would have been destroyed. I need not ask you concerning my daughter. I have already been told that she reached your camp in safety."

"She is safe," replied Collins. "How are you off here? How have you fared?"

"We had but five men, and we have lost two. One is killed, and another is fatally wounded. We could not have stood another assault. Your attack was a splendid one. It was an inspiration. In no other way could you have come to our rescue. But I am afraid that your command has suffered."

"I know nothing about it yet. Williams, have we lost any men?"

"Gettner is gone, sir. He was struck down by an arrow, and then tomahawked."

"Poor fellow. He was a good soldier."

The lieutenant sighed. He thought a victory dearly purchased by the loss of a man, especially of a man who had fought by his side in many rough combats in those wild regions.

"I am afraid that Bob Nocks is gone, too, sir," continued the corporal. "He hain't come in, and I can't see anything of him."

Collins was now fairly excited, and entirely forgot his wound, although it was quite painful. He felt that he might better lose his right hand than the tall trapper, and he knew that the Apaches, if they had got possession of Bob Nocks, would be sure to put him to death with the most horrid tortures that their devilish ingenuity could suggest.

He looked down the slope, and over it in all directions, but could see nothing of the tall form of his friend. He sent Blue Jim to reconnoiter and gain all the intelligence he could, and felt that he could do nothing more that night. The Shawnee crept out like a snake, and was invisible a moment after he had left the camp.

The Apaches did not venture another attack. They had been so roughly treated by De Manville's small force, that they were afraid to meddle with the camp after it had been reinforced by Collins's escort; but they were still in sight. In the course of half an hour the Shawnee returned, and reported that Bob Nocks was a prisoner among the Apaches, tightly bound and closely guarded, but unwounded. His horse had been struck down by an arrow, and he had been captured before he could disengage himself from the dying animal. In the morning, Blue Jim thought, the tall trapper would be tortured to death.

Nothing could then be done to save him. Collins put some of his own people on guard, to relieve De Manville's exhausted men, and all the others laid down to snatch a little sleep.

The lieutenant slept but little. Thoughts of the beautiful Emilie de Manville, and fears for his old and tried friend, kept his brain in a

whirl, and made him so restless that he was fain to get up, after a few unsatisfactory dozes, and walk about the camp.

He sent one of the men to sleep, and kept watch during the remainder of the night, anxiously peering into the darkness, as the moon was no longer visible, and impatiently waiting for day.

At last the morning broke, all crimson, and scarlet, and gold—beautiful exceedingly, but threatening a storm. All in the camp were soon awake, and busy in preparing some food, to invigorate them for the labors and dangers of the day. Hardly had they eaten, when the yells of the Apaches announced that there was some unusual excitement among them.

Collins knew too well what that yelling meant, and hastened to the front of the camp, where he could plainly see the Indians and all their proceedings.

The Apaches were well out of range of the white men's rifles, and most of them were dismounted, their horses having been taken down to the river, where they could get grass and water. The lieutenant looked through his glass, and saw the tall trapper in the midst of them, tied to a sapling, naked to the waist, and painted black.

The meaning of these ominous preparations was plain enough, and Collins turned almost black with rage as he observed them. He knew that the Apaches, who had recognized in Bob Nocks an old and dreaded enemy, would take the keenest delight in subjecting him to extreme indignity and torture. Already in imagination, he could see the old man spiked to the sapling, and could watch his skin crisping and his flesh shriveling under the slow heat which the savages so well know how to apply.

Collins turned away, sickened by the scene that his excited fancy had placed before him—sick at heart, but with a settled determination that this must be prevented, or, at the worst, terribly avenged. He called all the men around him and spoke to them briefly and calmly, but with intense earnestness.

"This is a dangerous undertaking," he said, when he had explained his purpose. "I order no man to follow me; I only ask for volunteers."

Every man volunteered. Even old Mr. De Manville, in spite of Collins's objections and remonstrances, persisted in making one of the party.

"Where is Coroa?" asked the lieutenant, looking around in vain for the Indian lad.

"He left the camp a little while ago," replied Corporal Williams. "He went out at the left, down into the canyon yonder and he carried two rifles.

CHAPTER V.

SMALL GAIN AND GREAT LOSS.

COLLINS was not a little puzzled by the disappearance of Coroa. Had the lad deserted, or had he merely escaped, or had he some plan of his own? The lieutenant, who found it hard to think bad of Coroa, was inclined to think that he had hit upon some expedient that might be of service to Bob Nocks; but he did not venture to suggest this idea to any of the party.

He had his men mounted, including Mr. De Manville, with their arms in order, and all in readiness for a charge. The Apaches had begun to dance around their intended victim, and were plying him with taunts and insults, preparatory to rougher treatment.

The dance ceased, and an Indian fitted an arrow to his bow, with the intention of trying the nerve of the captive by shooting close to his head, when there was a shot from the canyon near by, and the warrior fell dead in his tracks.

Another shot, and another Apache dropped, badly wounded in the leg.

Half the Indians hurried off, howling with rage, toward the canyon, to find the daring rifleman who had so rudely interrupted their sport, and the others suspended their operations to look after the dead man and the wounded one.

"Now is our time," said De Manville. "Let us charge them now."

"Not yet," replied Collins, who was now strangely calm and confident. "Those two shots were fired by Coroa, and I am convinced, though I could hardly tell why, that he has not got through with all he had in his head."

It was certain that the Apaches did not succeed in finding Coroa; for they returned to their camp slowly and in a dispirited manner, leaving a guard at the canyon. They had apparently changed their plan, and determined to commence the torture in right earnest, as they began to pick up sticks and pile them in a circle, within a few feet of the tall trapper.

"We must charge them," said De Manville, as he watched the pile grow larger and higher. "We must strike now, or it will be too late. We should have attacked them when they were startled and scattered."

"Give me a few minutes more," said Collins, who was looking through his glass. "We have that much grace. I am convinced that the Pueblo lad will show them yet another trick before he is done with them."

As he spoke a shot was heard in the direction of the river, followed by a yell of agony—a death-yell. Another shot and another yell, and then the neighing of horses and the trampling of hoofs.

"The Lord is with us!" exclaimed Collins, closing his glass quickly and thrusting it into his pocket. "Coroa has won the fight for us already. He has stampeded their horses."

It was, indeed, matter for exultation. In no way can Apaches be more thoroughly frightened than by a stampede. They know that they are but half men without their horses, and all other business must be laid aside when it is necessary to recover their lost or stolen animals.

More than half the men on the ground started toward the river to catch the horses and punish the marauder. The others proceeded to loose the prisoner from the sapling, as they had come to the conclusion that they must seek a safer place to finish their morning's amusement.

Collins then gave the order to charge, and the nine men went thundering down the slope. When within about twenty yards of the enemy they halted, and sent a volley from their rifles

and carbines into the astonished Apaches, who had hastily seized their arms, and were huddled together like a flock of sheep. Then they drew their revolvers, and again spurred their horses forward.

Lieutenant Collins, although he gave the order to halt and fire, had not halted with the others, but dashed on through the Apaches, straight to the sapling near which Bob Nocks was standing. This was rendered necessary by the critical situation of the trapper, whom the Apaches, perceiving that a rescue was intended, had determined to murder on the spot.

It was fortunate for Bob Nocks that his feet were free, although his hands were tied. As an Apache rushed at him with uplifted tomahawk, the tall trapper "let out" with his long left leg, and administered to his adversary such a severe kick in the stomach that the Indian fell to the ground, howling with pain. Another, thus admonished to keep at a safe distance, was about to send an arrow through the prisoner's body, when Collins coming up just in time, spoiled his aim forever with a pistol-bullet. The next moment he cut with his saber the cord that bound his friend's arms, and Bob Nocks, catching up a tomahawk, rushed into the thick of the fight.

A second time the Apaches were taken at a disadvantage. Dismounted, partially surprised, with many of their best warriors absent, they could not prevent their foes from riding through and scattering them. But the first dash was all that had been intended by the whites. They could not afford to lose any men, even to gain a signal victory, and Collins, directly after the release of Bob Nocks, gave the order to retire to the camp.

As soon as the order to retire was given, the party wheeled and dashed back up the hill, accompanied by Bob Nocks, who had caught and mounted an Apache horse. As they ascended the slope they spread out, to divert the aim of the enemies in their rear. When they had got out of arrow-shot they halted and looked back, and made a terrible discovery.

Lieutenant Collins was not among them!

Just as he gave the order to retire, his horse was struck in the flank by an arrow. Maddened with pain, the animal seized the bit in his teeth, and dashed off furiously toward the east, in spite of Collins's utmost efforts to control him. When Bob Nocks looked back, the horse, with Collins tugging vainly at the rein, was heading direct for a body of Apaches that were coming up from the direction of the river. Another arrow struck him, and he turned and rushed violently toward the canyon which Collins had flanked when he went to the assistance of De Manville.

"He is gone!" said the tall trapper, in a choking voice, as the frantic steed neared the canyon.

The next instant horse and rider disappeared, and the Apaches, hastening to the spot where they had gone over, clustered around it like a flock of vultures.

The Indians, reinforced by mounted men, took the offensive, and so annoyed the white men with their arrows, that they were compelled to take refuge in the camp.

There they found Coroa, with his two rifles, greatly agitated by grief and anger: for he had seen Collins borne to destruction by his runaway horse, which had closed his career by a leap into the canyon. He besieged Corporal Williams and De Manville and Bob Nocks with questions and reproaches and entreaties, begging them to go to the rescue of Collins, and accusing them of having deserted their friend, until Williams was obliged to order him to be quiet, under penalty of being deprived of his rifle.

"It's no use talkin', boy," said the tall trapper, "and that's no good in cryin'. The lieutenant is gone under, and we couldn't help it, though I reckon we feel as bad about it as anybody. It 'ud be just p'intedly onpossible for any man to tumble into that canyon and live."

Coroa said nothing more concerning Collins and his fate. His next move was, to beg Mr. De Manville for a supply of powder and bullets and some dried meat. These being furnished him, he soon stole out of the camp, unperceived, and disappeared in the canyon at the right.

A great surprise awaited the white men. The Apaches, after collecting their horses, mounted and rode off in a body toward the west, carrying off their dead and wounded. It was useless to attempt to pursue them, and their late antagonists watched them until they were out of sight, glad enough to get rid of them.

When the coast was clear, a portion of the party went to the canyon, where Collins had disappeared. With considerable difficulty they descended into it, and found the mangled remains of his horse; but his own body was not to be seen. They could only suppose that it had been taken away by the Indians, unless, as Bob Nocks began to think might be possible, the lieutenant had not gone over the precipice.

Sadly they returned to the camp, De Manville's wagons were got under way, and all proceeded, by the nearest practicable route, to Collins's late camp.

"I am going to meet my daughter," said De Manville to Bob Nocks, as they approached the camp in the canyon. "Your brave young officer saved my child and myself from the Indians, and we owe him a debt of gratitude which we can never repay now. My pleasure in meeting her will be spoiled by the thought that he has lost his life in saving us."

"That's a sore subject, Cap," replied the tall trapper, "and I jest wish you'd drop it."

At the mouth of the canyon they were met by the two teamsters, who appeared to be very much astonished, if not frightened.

"What is the matter here?" asked Williams, riding up to them. "Where are the rest of you?"

"Don't know nothin' about 'em," stupidly answered one of the men.

"Is the young lady here? Is my daughter safe?" anxiously inquired Mr. De Manville.

"Don't know nothin' about her, neither."

"And the Spaniard?" asked Williams.

"Reckon he's gone with the crowd."

Bob Nocks came forward, angry enough, as he expressed it, to eat a dozen teamsters. By means of hard threats and severe cross-ques-

tioning, he contrived to extract the truth from the delinquents.

It appeared that the two Texans had kindly offered to stand guard during the night, and the teamsters "allowing" that this was an excellent idea, had stretched themselves out to sleep. When they awoke in the morning, nothing was to be seen of the Texans or the Spaniard or the girl. Four horses were also missing, and the deserters had helped themselves liberally from the provision wagons.

Mr. De Manville sat like one stupefied. He looked as if he was ready to fall from his horse. But he soon roused himself and asked who and what was the Spaniard who had been spoken of.

Corporal Williams gave him the name and description of the Spaniard.

"Manuel Gutierrez!" exclaimed the old man. "I would not have thought that he could cross our path in the wilds. And those Texans—who were they?"

Williams told all he knew about Sandy Bill and his "pard," including the difficulty between the former and Collins, on the occasion of the capture of Coroa.

"It is plain enough now," said the stricken father. "The gold of that rascally Mexican, and the Texan's hatred of your officer, have combined to make them commit this deed. They have carried off my child, and I would rather they had driven a knife into my heart."

The old man went within the canyon and seated himself, that he might be alone with his grief. For the time he was entirely unnerved, unmanned, unable to make an effort to search for his child.

After a while, Bob Nocks and Williams came in, and sought to console him.

"I've been thinkin'," said the tall trapper, "that it airn't tototally sart'in that that young Injun warn't right about the leftenant. It stands to reason that the reds would take his scalp, but it ain't a bit likely that they would kerry off his carkiss. I'm doubtin' that he didn't go over into the canyon, and that the 'Paches hev got him. It's my notion that we'd better start out and hunt fur him and the gal. What do you say, Williams?"

Williams could not think of such a thing. He knew his duty to the Government, whose servant he was, and that required him to take the wagons and other public property to Santa Fe, without loss of time.

"Wal, Cap, thar's enough of us, anyhow," said Bob Nocks. "I will go, and Jack Harber will go, and the Shawnee, and I reckon your two men will take a hand."

Mr. De Manville thought that he could answer for them.

"It's my opunyon, then, that we orter *cache* this plunder of your'n, and light out hot-foot, as soon as the weather will let us."

"We will start at once!" exclaimed De Manville. "Why should we delay an instant?"

"That'll sca'cely do, Cap. Thar's a storm comin', and when it rains in these parts the bottom drops out of the big cistern up yonder all to onc't. We must take keer of the plunder, and git the critters and ourselves into shelter tol'able sudden."

CHAPTER VI.

COROA'S FEAT.

LIEUTENANT COLLINS had not fallen into the canyon.

When he perceived that the horse must surely go over the precipice, he threw himself from his back, although he was going at breakneck speed. His action was as quick as it could possibly be, but hardly quick enough. The impetus of the furious animal's career carried him beyond the point at which he had wished to alight, to the very edge of the cliff.

Half stunned and breathless, he had enough instinctive sense to clutch convulsively at the points of rock within his reach, and there he hung, over the frightful gorge, holding on to life with a grip of desperation.

The Apaches saw his situation, and hastened to pluck him forth, not as a brand from the burning fire, but as a brand *for* the burning. They knew his uniform, and hated it. They recognized in him not only the man who had led the attacks by which they had lately suffered so severely, but the man who had proved himself a terrible foe in many fierce encounters. They had lost Bob Nocks, but had exchanged him for a man whom they could take equal pleasure in torturing.

This choice morsel, also, they had nearly missed. The clutch of Collins's fingers was relaxing when they came to him, and he fainted as they seized him, and transferred him from the viewless air to the solid rock.

With such a womanly weakness as fainting the savages had no sympathy, if they understood it. They picked up the insensible man, and carried him away, but evinced, in so doing, a considerable degree of caution and discretion,

They had seen enough of the white warriors on the hill to know that a prisoner might not be altogether safe in their hands, if these white men should discover that they had him. They determined, therefore, to keep this one concealed from their view, and huddled around him as they carried him, until they reached the head of the gorge, where they hid him. They tied his hands and feet securely, placed a guard over him, and left him to come to his senses at his leisure.

They held a brief council, at which it was decided that they would not remain any longer in that vicinity, as game was scarce, and white men were hard to kill, but would move westward to their lodges, where grass and game were plenty, and where they might torment the life out of their prisoner, with none to molest or make them afraid.

As soon as they had secured their horses, and had taken care of their dead and wounded, they took up their line of march. Collins, who had recovered from his swoon, was set on a horse, with his feet tied under the belly, and was made to ride in the middle of the band.

The region which they were obliged to traverse, like that which they were leaving, was seamed in all directions by immense fissures. To avoid these obstacles they were often obliged to make long circuits, or to descend and ascend the gorges by dangerous paths.

About the middle of the afternoon they came to a high plateau, the summit of which could

only be reached by a narrow but not very deep canyon. The plateau could have been turned by a circuit of some thirty miles; but the Indians preferred to pass through the canyon, as they were accustomed to do.

They had got about half-way through the canyon, when the sky became overcast. Ponderous purple clouds came rolling down from the north in immense masses, entirely shutting out the light of the sun, and darkening the earth as if with an eclipse. Down in the canyon it was so dark that the travelers could hardly see their way.

The Apaches halted, shuddered, and looked at each other in dismay. Their horses trembled with affright, and seemed incapable of exertion. They, as well as their masters, knew well enough what was coming, and had good reason to dread it.

There was a roaring, at the north and west, that was almost deafening, and that approached with marvelous rapidity, and then it seemed that the heavens had literally opened and poured forth all their contents at once. It did not rain—such a deluge could not be called a rain—every drop was a bucketful.

The Apaches wheeled their horses as quick as thought, and dashed down the canyon at break-neck speed, forgetting their prisoner, thinking of nothing but their own escape from the flood that was sure to come.

Collins's horse would have followed them; but the officer was in full possession of his senses now, and had come to the conclusion that anything was preferable to a lingering death at the hands of the Apaches. Besides, he was not aware of the nature and extent of the peril which he was about to encounter, from which the Apaches had fled in such headlong haste.

He saw and understood it before the echoes of the hoofs died away. With a terrible roaring the flood came sweeping down the canyon. Without any further warning, it came in a mass, an immense volume of water, as if a cataract had broken loose from its moorings. Collins cast a hurried glance at the cliffs on each side of him, saw no escape from this destruction, and closed his eyes to await the result.

The horse that he rode became frantic, as the great wave rushed down resistlessly. He reared, all a-shudder with fright, plunged forward, and fell on his knees on the rocks. Then it was that Collins saw good cause to recognize the existence of an overruling Providence, and his heart went out in a brief but earnest gush of thankfulness.

As the horse fell, the thongs that bound the prisoner's feet under the horse's belly suddenly burst asunder. When the brute rose, nearly lamed and wholly terrified, Collins discovered that his feet were free, and he slipped from the back of the horse, that went flying down the canyon, only to be overtaken and swallowed up by the overwhelming rush of water.

Collins had not a second to lose. When his limbs were free the instinct of self-preservation at once came back to him. He ran to the side of the gorge, and desperately commenced climbing the cliff. His feet had been badly bruised by the fall of the horse, and he was nearly swept away by the flood, that struck him below the

knees as he began the ascent; but he held on tenaciously to the face of the rock, grasping such projections as were available, and never for an instant relaxing his efforts.

He reached a little shelf in the cliff, some twenty feet from the bottom of the gorge, which had been his goal when he started. It was wide enough to hold him, and he fell down upon it, breathless and exhausted.

The roaring of the torrent told him that his danger was not over, and he arose and surveyed the scene as calmly as he could. The rain—if such a deluge could be called a rain—had suddenly ceased; but the water below him was swelling rapidly.

Above him, to the distance of twelve or fifteen feet, the cliff was perpendicular and smooth, with no inequalities or projections that could afford holding-place for feet or hands.

If he could only be a little higher, he might again climb the cliff; but those twelve or fifteen feet were absolutely impassable. Recognizing this fact, he turned and looked placidly at the torrent, now nearly up to the shelf on which he was standing. In a minute it was on the shelf; in another it was crawling up his ankles; in a few more minutes it would sweep him away or overwhelm him.

He started as he heard a cry, up above him, hardly heard amid the roaring of the flood. He looked up, and saw a dark figure niched in the side of the cliff. Then a rope was let down to him, and he caught it and clung to it, just as the water was taking him off his feet. It was a lariat of rawhide, knotted at convenient distances.

The figure above shouted, "Come up—the lariat is fast here!" The voice sounded like that of Coroa, Collins thought; but he had no time to indulge in wonder or conjecture, and hastened to climb for his life.

It would have been an easy task for him if he had not been so exhausted by his previous efforts, and if his feet had not been so badly bruised. As it was, he had hard enough climbing until he got beyond the twelve or fifteen feet of perpendicular wall, and found not only foot-holds to help him, but an occasional chance to rest and breathe.

He thus climbed the length of the lariat, and was assisted up on the ledge where it was made fast, by no other than Coroa, who had been cheering and encouraging him during his difficult ascent. He sat down on the ledge, too worn out and weak to reply to the questions and congratulations of the Indian lad.

After a while he ventured to look down from the ledge, and saw that the flood was far above the place where he had first found refuge; but it had already begun to recede. He shuddered as he realized how narrow his escape had been, and felt that he owed his life to the skill and devotion of Coroa.

"How did you get down here?" he asked.

"Coraclimbed down."

"How will you get back?"

"Coraclimbs back."

"Will it not be easier to wait until the water runs out, and then go down into the canyon?"

"That might be easy; but it would not be safe. The Apaches will come back through the

canyon as soon as the water is gone. We must get up yonder and out of their way."

"I can never climb that rock," said Collins, looking up at the cliff.

Coroa coiled the lariat, tied it to his waist, and began to climb the cliff; a feat which he accomplished with the natural agility of a monkey, rather than with the acquired skill of a man. Collins watched him as he ascended, wondering how he clung so close to the rock, supporting himself only by the slight inequalities of its rugged face. But he went up, slowly and laboriously, until he reached another ledge, where he seated himself to rest.

After a few minutes he made one end of the lariat fast to a projecting piece of rock, and lowered the other end to Collins, who soon climbed up and seated himself by the side of his red friend.

"Now," said Coroa, when Collins had had time to breathe, "we can get to the top without using the lariat. See! the water is nearly gone, and the Apaches will soon be back."

Collins looked above him, and saw that the remainder of the cliff shelved backward from the canyon, and that its ascent, although difficult, was feasible.

As the Apaches might at any moment come up the canyon, the two hastened to climb the cliff, Coroa taking the lead.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MEXICAN'S STRATEGY.

AFTER Collins and his party went to the rescue of her father, Emilie de Manville was excited and restless. Her suddenly discovered love for the young officer (for she could not help confessing to herself that she loved him as soon as she saw him), and her anxiety concerning her father, kept her mind in such a tumult, that she had no thought of sleeping, or even of resting.

She walked the rocky bed of the canyon, listening to the occasional shots that were brought down the river by the north wind, until the firing ceased entirely. Then she stopped, leaned against one of the wagons, and listened more intently than ever; but she heard nothing. Had Collins succeeded in bringing relief to her father, or did the silence portend that the savages had been victorious over their combined antagonists? She could not even guess, and it was natural that she should fear the worst. At last she went back to the fire, laid down, and wrapped herself in a blanket, hoping that merciful sleep would close her weary eyelids and suffer her to forget her troubles for a time.

While she had been thus engaged, some negotiations in the way of bargain and sale had been carried on in the canyon.

Manuel Gutierrez, gloomily silent in his nook, had been revolving his own affairs in his mind. Struck by a brilliant idea, he had beckoned to Sandy Bill, who was seated by the fire with his "pard," composedly smoking his pipe.

There is a sort of free-masonry among rascals. They know each other at sight, and a wink, or a nod, or a glance from one of them is sufficient to tell another that he means "business." Thus it was that Sandy Bill and Manuel

Gutierrez, a small rascal and a rascal on a large scale, naturally and easily came together.

The Texan got on his feet, looked around, puffed a few whiffs, gradually sidled up to the Mexican, and took a seat by his side in his nook.

"What do you want, old boss?"

"You have cause to dislike that American officer," replied Gutierrez. "He has insulted you, and deprived you of your rights in a prisoner."

"You may as well dry that up, stranger. Thar's no use in tryin' to come at me that way. S'posin' I *hev* got a grudge ag'in' the youngster? That is my consarn, and not your'n. I kin take keer of it, I reckon."

"I, also, hate him."

"Wal, you're welcome to. I hain't no notion of interferin'. But that ain't what you wanted to tell me, and you needn't be gittin' behind cover. Ef you mean business, speak it out. Ef it will pay, count this child in."

"I think I can trust you."

"Think jist what you please about that, stranger. I ain't called overly honest, and I don't purtend to be honest; but I'm open fur a trader."

"I want that American girl. I believe your officer loves her, and that he has taken her fancy. If we can get her away from here and from him, I will gain what I wish, and you will be well revenged. He has gone on a fool's errand, and has left here but you and your friend and those stupid teamsters. If we can persuade those teamsters to sleep, or can get them out of the way, we can easily carry her off."

"Where 'u'd you take her to?"

"I will answer for that. I will take her where he will not be likely to follow."

"It don't make no differ, nohow. I'm tired of this yere job I'm on, and am ready to go anywhar. How much are you willin' to pay? I know you've got some shiners, and I'd like to see the color of 'em."

The Mexican—who called himself a Spaniard—opened a belt that he wore around his waist, and extracted therefrom a number of Mexican and Spanish gold pieces, which he counted into the rough palm of Sandy Bill.

"Tain't enough," said the Texan, holding out his hand for more.

Gutierrez counted out a few more pieces.

"Tain't enough, yit."

"When we are two days' journey from here, the sum will be doubled."

"All right, ef it's sure, and I reckon we kin make it sure. I must go and fix it up with my pardner now, and then I will look arter the teamsters."

A few words sufficed to arrange the matter with Sam Hinks, and then Sandy Bill sauntered up to the teamsters, and told them that they might go to sleep if they wished to, as he and his "pardner" meant to keep watch that night. As they had had their supper and a smoke, and were nodding drowsily, they thankfully accepted the offer, and were soon in the realm of Morpheus.

Then the Texan, after getting a handkerchief from Gutierrez, which he put in the breast pocket of his greasy hunting-shirt, went out to

the mouth of the canyon, beyond the wagons. With the assistance of Hinks, he caught four horses from the drove that had been again turned out to graze, bridled and saddled them, and tethered them near by.

Leaving Hinks outside, he returned into the canyon. After looking closely at the teamsters, to make sure that they were sleeping soundly, he stepped to where Emilie was lying, wrapped in her blanket, and spoke to her.

"Ef so be as you're awake, miss, I thought p'raps you might like to know."

"To know what?" asked Emilie, starting up hastily, her dislike of the repulsive-looking desperado being overcome by her curiosity and anxiety.

"I allowed that our folks may be comin' back, miss. I heard some hosses up yonder."

"Perhaps it may be the Apaches, who have killed our friends, and are coming to kill us."

"No danger of that, I reckon. Ef the redskins had wiped out the whites, thar'd hev been some of the all-firedest yellin' you ever heerd. Do you keer to come out and listen?"

Emilie felt an instinctive repugnance toward the Texan, who, if he was to be judged by his looks, would require no great inducement to become a cut-throat and an assassin; but she was unable to sleep, her anxiety was extreme, and she thought that there could not possibly be any danger in stepping out and listening for her friends.

She followed Sandy Bill out to the mouth of the canyon, beyond the wagons, where she stopped and listened intently; but she heard nothing.

"Do you hear 'em, miss?" asked the Texan.

"I hear nothing but the wind."

"Reckon your hearin' ain't trained to the business, like ours is. Didn't you hear 'em, Sam?"

"I heerd 'em a minute ago."

"Jist you put your ear cluss to that wagon-wheel, miss. The ground kinder kerryes the sound better'n the air, and the wheel will kerry it up to your ear."

There was reason in this, as Emilie knew, and she laid her delicate ear close against the wheel. Still she heard nothing but the wind.

But she felt something, straightway. A handkerchief was thrust into her mouth, and held there by a strong hand. At the same time her arms were seized and bound securely behind her back. Her first attempt at a scream was stifled, and her slight struggles were not of the least avail. She was speechless and powerless, in the hands of the ruffians.

Gutierrez, who had been watching these proceedings from behind the wagons, now came out, chuckling with gratification. The handkerchief was adjusted and fastened so that Emilie was completely gagged, and the Mexican took charge of her, telling the Texan to complete their preparations as quickly as possible. They brought out their rifles, helped themselves to ammunition and a good supply of provisions from the wagons, and led the way to the place where they had tethered the horses, which were quickly saddled and ready for the journey.

After looking in at the canyon, to see that the teamsters were still sleeping, Sandy Bill mounted

his horses and led the way, followed by Gutierrez and Sam Hinks, one on each side of Emilie.

When they were fairly out of sight and hearing of the canyon, Gutierrez fastened a rein to the bit of Emilie's horse, and held the end in his hand. He then removed the bandage from her mouth, leaving her free to use her only weapon, her tongue.

As soon as she was allowed to speak, she addressed him with as much calmness as she could assume, but with a voice nearly choked by indignation, demanding to know how he dared to treat her in that manner, and what his purpose was in stealing her away from her friends.

Manuel Gutierrez claimed to possess the language and manners, if he had not the heart and inspirations, of a gentleman. On this occasion he came out in his blandest and best style, declaring that it was uncontrollable love that had led him to commit an act of seeming violence. He assured her that she should suffer no harm, but her slightest wish should be his law, except in one particular; and showered upon her an abundance of high-flown compliments, which fell upon unheeding ears. All this in his most courtly style, and in meek and gentle tones which he well knew how to assume when occasion required their use.

His assurances and his flatteries alike were treated by Emilie with silent contempt. She knew that she was in his power, and was determined not to provoke him to use his power, as long as she could restrain herself. She thought of escape, but saw no chance to make an effort to regain her freedom. If she could get loose from those three men, she would run for it, as she ran from the Apaches, and trust to the speed of her horse to take her beyond their reach; but Gutierrez was at her side, leading her horse, Sandy Bill in the front, and Sam Hinks in the rear.

She could only wait and hope for an opportunity, and in the mean time she rode on quietly enough, even pretending to listen to what the Mexican was saying.

CHAPTER VIII.

GUTIERREZ AS A LEADER.

AFTER traveling southward an hour, or thereabout, the party turned to the west, under the direction of Gutierrez, and ascended a slope, which brought them gradually up into the high land. The moon gave light enough to enable the party to pick their way; but something more than light was needed.

Gutierrez supplied what was lacking. Greatly to the surprise of Sandy Bill, he at once took upon himself the office of pilot, riding in front, and directing the course to be taken, and if he knew every rock and hole in the entire plateau.

At this the two Texans grumbled a little. Sandy Bill "allowed" that he surely "ort to know that kentry better'n any greenhorn of a greaser;" but he was soon compelled to confess (to himself only) that his knowledge was mere ignorance compared to that of Gutierrez, whose familiarity with the route, in all its windings and intricacies, was something marvelous.

A great change, too, came over the Mexican, when he had got fairly within the rugged passes of the plateau, and had taken the lead of the

party. He then appeared to be a man who was accustomed to command, and his orders were given in such a tone of authority, that his followers did not pretend to dispute them, though they did a great deal of internal grumbling.

Emilie de Manville, also, was surprised at the change in Gutierrez. She had seen him as the indolent and luxurious proprietor of an estate in California, and had again seen him as a sullen, morose and vindictive prisoner; she now beheld in him a leader, a man confident in his own will, and exercising over those around him a control that appeared to be his right. But this new phase of his character did not render him a grain less repulsive to her, or remove a particle of her distrust and dislike.

As they traversed the plateau getting further and further from the river, Emilie felt that her chances of escaping were rapidly slipping away from her. A few miles more, and she would be unable to find her way back to her friends, no matter how good an opportunity might present itself for getting away from her enemies. If she was to escape, she could delay the effort no longer.

She had a penknife, small but sharp, and she thought that this little weapon might be the instrument by which she would free herself. She opened it, unseen by Gutierrez, and concealed it in her sleeve. Leaning forward, as if to pat her horse's neck, with one stroke she cut the rein by which the Mexican held the horse, and jerked the bridle, for the purpose of wheeling and flying.

Not quite quick enough. It is said that an Indian has eyes in the back of his head. If this is true, there must have been Indian blood in the veins of Manuel Gutierrez. He was looking ahead when Emilie cut the rein, as if to discover a pass in a range of hills that closed the view to the westward; but he turned as quick as lightning, and caught her by the wrist before she could wheel her horse.

"You need not try that again," he said, in his gentlest and most courtly accents. "What would you have done, if you had succeeded in getting away from us? I have no doubt that your horse could outrun all of ours; but he could not outrun a bullet. If there had been any chance for you to escape, I would have shot your horse. As you have cut the rein, I will not fasten it again. I merely remind you that it is impossible for you to escape."

Emilie made no reply, but rode on, silently and sorrowfully.

"What are you huntin' fur, Cap?" asked Sandy Bill, as Gutierrez was again looking toward the west. "The pass is consid'able furder to the north, I reckon."

"Ten or twelve miles, I believe," replied the Mexican. "But I am not looking for the pass. We ought to camp pretty soon to get a little rest before daylight. There is a good place vonder"—pointing toward the southwest—"a hole in the hill with a spring in it."

"Ef thar's any water nearer than the river, this child never come across it."

"Very likely; but you will see some to-night. Let us get on a little faster."

In less than an hour they reached the hole in the hill, in the exact direction that Gutierrez

had pointed out. It was rather too shallow to be called a cavern, but was deep enough to afford shelter for a large party, and in the middle a clear spring bubbled up.

"What sort of a man is this yar?" Sandy Bill asked his "pard," as they were picketing the horses where they could graze. "I tuck him to be a greenhorn; but he knows this kintry better'n we do, jest like a book. Who in thunder is he, anyhow?"

"You're too much fur me thar," replied Hinks. "'Pears like I've seen him somewhar; but I'm kinder dazed about it. I kain't think of but one man who ever acted and talked like him, and that was an Injun. Reckon he mought be a pretty hard chap to git ahead of."

"Mind yer eye, Bill, when you undertake that job."

Gutierrez had assisted Emilie to alight, and had escorted her within the hollow, where, after giving her a cup of the delicious water, he spread blankets on the ground, and besought her to try and get some sleep.

She was willing enough, as she knew that her body and mind needed repose, and felt that she would require all the powers of both.

"Is it just about safe to camp yar, Cap?" asked Sandy Bill, when he came in with his companion. "Ain't you afraid that Collins and his folks may foller on our trail and ketch up with us?"

"Not at all. If the Apaches have not wiped them out, which is very likely, they are shut up in the old Frenchman's camp, and will not get away from there soon."

"Which of us do you want to keep watch, Cap?"

"Neither. You may watch if you wish to, or go to sleep if you choose. It is all the same to me."

The Mexican wrapped himself up in a blanket and laid down by the fire; but the two Texans were decidedly opposed to such carelessness, and kept watch alternately during the remainder of the night.

In the morning Sandy Bill shot a couple of rabbits, the only game visible. Gutierrez took a kettle that Hinks carried at his saddle-bow, and put in it one of the rabbits, with some dried meat, broken crackers, salt and red pepper. He thus made a savory stew, of which he gave a portion to Emilie, with a tin cup of coffee. She ate heartily, as she needed refreshment, and Gutierrez improved upon her example to such an extent that he was obliged to make another kettleful for the Texans.

Leaving this camp, they went northward until they reached the pass, which took them through the range of hills and they emerged upon a rolling plain, with the course of a stream, marked by willows and cottonwoods in a valley at a distance, and a little timber scattered here and there.

About the middle of the afternoon, while they were journeying toward the stream, the Mexican saw a cloud rising in the north, the meaning of which he knew well enough.

"We are about to have a deluge of rain," he said. "It will be here in a few minutes. We must make a shelter, and have not a second to spare."

Under his direction, two stout stakes, connected by a cross-piece, were set firmly in the ground on the side of a hill. One end of a waterproof blanket was made fast to the cross-piece, and the other end was stretched back to the ground, up the hill, where it was securely pinned to the earth. The three men then set at work, with their knives and short axes, and soon dug a deep ditch at the back and sides of the blanket, so that the water could freely pass off. Sending Emilie in first, they all huddled under the blanket, and awaited the storm.

It came as soon as they were sheltered. When it was over, they could plainly hear the roaring of the stream, which had overflowed its banks, and had spread over a considerable portion of the plain.

When the ground had dried off a little, they resumed their journey, still moving toward the north, and following the course of the stream, until night overtook them, and they camped near the water. An antelope, that Sandy Bill had shot, furnished their supper, and Emilie laid down to rest after the meal, while Gutierrez lighted a cigarrita, and the Texans smoked their pipes.

Sandy Bill had something on his mind, and he proceeded to "spit it out."

"I say, Cap, I reckon we've gone about fur enough on this yer' scout. 'Pears like you know this kentry better'n either of us, and don't want no guidin'. Ef it's all the same to you, we'll quit in the mornin', and we'd like to hev the rest of them shiners."

"We have not yet come two days' journey from the camp by the river," calmly replied the Mexican. "When you have performed your part of the bargain, I will perform mine."

"Don't you think you could let us off sooner'n that, Cap?"

"No, indeed. I would like you to stay with me longer, and am willing to pay you for your time."

"Couldn't stay any longer, Cap. We've got another notion into our heads. Will our time be out by noon to-morrer?"

"Yes."

"And then you'll settle up with us?"

"Yes."

The Mexican rolled himself in his blanket, and laid down by the fire, as placidly as if he had not been in the presence of two desperadoes who were plotting to murder and rob him.

Why did they not kill him then and there?

The reason was a physical one, and neither lack of will nor qualms of conscience had anything to do with it.

They were unwilling to retrace their steps, for fear of coming in contact with Collins and his party, who would undoubtedly follow on their trail.

Their only safe course, after getting rid of the Mexican, would be to cross the stream and push westward; but the water was now too high to admit of this procedure. In the morning it would be down, and then would be the best time to carry their plot into execution.

All this was known to Gutierrez, and entered into his calculations. It was because he easily read their thoughts, that he laid down to rest so

calmly and without the least appearance of fear. He slept tranquilly, while the Texans kept watch by turns.

CHAPTER IX.

A BAREBACK RIDE.

In the morning Gutierrez and his party were early on the way, still journeying toward the north.

They had traveled something more than an hour, when they came in sight of a precipitous range of bluffs, stretching across from east to west, where the stream, whose course they had been following, debouched from a deep canyon.

Sandy Bill, who had been riding in the advance, made a pretext for falling back and joining his comrade in the rear.

The Mexican perceived that the time had come for putting in operation a plan of his own. Looking northward, his keen gaze descried some dark figures close under the bluff, and a gleam of satisfaction lighted up his swarthy countenance.

Suddenly wheeling his horse, he faced the two Texans, with his rifle cocked and leveled.

"If either of you raises a weapon," he said, "or makes a motion to raise a weapon, I will shoot him dead. I know what you mean. You want to kill me and take my money; but that game is blocked. Look behind me, and tell me what you see."

"Injuns!" exclaimed the astonished Texans, as they raised their eyes and looked beyond their leader.

"Yes. They are Apaches, and my friends. I do not desire your blood, although you have sought mine. You may go, and you had better get away from here as fast as your horses can carry you."

The Texans evidently thought so, too; for they put spurs to their horses, and made fast time in a southerly direction.

Gutierrez then had an opportunity to attend to another matter of business.

Emilie had taken occasion of the fracas to make an attempt to escape—an attempt which she would not have made if she had not been excited.

The attention of Gutierrez being occupied by the two Texans, she thought that she saw a chance to give him the slip; but she hardly knew in what direction to run. Toward the south were the Texans, at the west was the impassable stream, at the north was the range of bluffs. Only the east was left to her, and in that direction her horse bounded like an arrow, as she spoke to him and urged him on.

Gutierrez gave her but one hasty glance, and a slight sneer curled his lip, as he concluded his business with the Texans.

When he had sent them flying toward the south, he turned and looked after his fair prisoner. She had stopped. Seeing the Indians coming from the bluffs at a gallop, and spreading out to intercept her, she knew that she must abandon her attempt to escape. After a moment's hesitation, she rode slowly back to Gutierrez. At the worst, he was a shade better than the savages.

"You are very foolish to think of getting away from me," said the Mexican, who rode forward to meet her. "What is it that you Americans say about jumping from the frying-pan to the fire? I repeat it, senorita; it is impossible for you to escape."

The Apaches came forward at full speed, circling around Gutierrez and his companion, brandishing their lances, striking their shields, and forcing their horses to execute all manner of capers.

As their circles narrowed, Gutierrez raised his hands with the forefingers locked, in token of friendship. The signal was responded to, and the Indians rode forward quietly, surrounding the two, while their chiefs dismounted, and went to speak to the Mexican, who had also dismounted.

He spoke a few words to them in their own language, and they greeted him with the most extravagant expressions of delight, greatly to the surprise of Emilie, who was still more astonished to hear them address him as Senor Pablo.

The Indian speakers asked questions concerning Emilie, pointing at her, which Gutierrez answered, apparently to their satisfaction. There was then a long talk between the Mexican and the two chiefs, who were named Mathiolo and Wolf's Head, in which some of the other Apaches occasionally took part. Emilie listened with open eyes, and thought that she could guess something of its purport, from the abundant gesticulation and pantomimic action used by the speakers. She inferred that they were discussing the probability of Collins and his party following her trail, and of the stream soon getting low enough to be fordable.

The upshot of it was that they concluded to stop where they were for the present, and a portion of the Indians dispersed in search of game, while the others, turning their horses loose to graze, "loafed" about.

One portion of the conversation between Gutierrez and the chiefs had interested and excited Emilie in no slight degree. She judged, from their gestures and actions, that they were speaking of Lieutenant Collins, and she feared that some disaster had happened to him. It might be only her fancy; but it caused an oppressive feeling that she could not shake off.

Her doubt was changed to certainty when the Mexican approached her, after the talk, with much apparent sympathy and commiseration in his looks and tones.

"I have some news that may cause you grief," he said. "That young American officer, who went to the relief of your father's camp, has met with an accident. But I have the satisfaction of assuring you that your father and his friends are safe. The officer was captured by the Apaches, who then abandoned the attempt upon the camp, and carried him westward. They left him in a narrow canyon, during the flood that followed the heavy rain yesterday, and he was undoubtedly swept away and drowned."

She received this communication so coolly and tranquilly that Gutierrez could only believe that she did not credit it, and he called Mathiolo, a chief who spoke a little English,

to bear witness to the truth of what he had told her.

The chief duly corroborated the white man's story; but Emilie remained calm and impassive, merely dropping a tribute to the memory of the officer.

"He was a brave man," she said, "and his country has lost a good soldier."

This was all, and Gutierrez began to think that he had been mistaken in supposing that she had fallen in love with Collins.

After noon the water had so far receded that the stream was fordable, and the Apaches crossed it with Gutierrez and Emilie. They ascended the bluff by a steep and circuitous route, and came out upon a broad plateau, that stretched far away toward the north. Here were pitched the skin lodges of a considerable village of Apaches, and the warriors, who had been absent a week or more, were rapturously greeted by their wives and children.

Emilie was assigned a lodge to herself, and two warriors were detailed to guard it, but the knowledge of her captivity did not trouble her then. She thought only of Collins, who had lost his life for her sake, in rescuing her father from the savages.

In the morning she walked out of the lodge, and discovered that there was no restraint upon her movements, except that the two Indian guards followed her and kept watch upon her.

As she looked toward the west she was surprised, astonished, wonder-stricken. On a bluff, high above the plateau on which the village was located, was a magical city, or it seemed a magical city to her, while the morning sun was touching its white houses and their white roofs with silver and gold. In the center was a building much taller than the rest, and the town was surrounded by a high wall, all bright and shining. The bluff, too, was streaked with veins of quartz, that reflected the rays of the sun, until the sight was dazzling to her eye.

Emilie could not help wondering whether this was a real city or an optical illusion. She had heard of the mirage, and thought that this must be one of the manifestations of that strange phenomenon.

Gutierrez stepped up to her as she was gazing and wondering.

"You are surprised," he said, "and are doubting whether you really see what is before your eyes. Permit me to assure you that it is real. That is a city built with hands, of solid stone and brick. As the Americans say, it has been fenced in and whitewashed."

Emilie's curiosity overcame her repugnance to the man, and she asked him what people they were who lived there.

"They belong to the Moqui tribe, and are of the same race with the Apaches, but are called a half-civilized people. Yet there are hard tales told about them. It is said that they kill children and maidens, offering them up as sacrifices to their idols."

Emile turned to go back to the village; but such a howling and screeching arose there that she stopped.

"You will not be pleased with affairs at the village," said Gutierrez. "The Apaches have begun the mourning for their slain warriors,

and the sights and sounds would sicken you. You had better walk out on the plain for a while, if you can possibly endure my presence. I have assured you that you shall suffer no harm."

Emilie's heart was near bursting. Grief for the loss of Lieutenant Collins, and thoughts of her father's agony at discovering that she had been carried away, troubled her to such an extent, that she was hardly capable of any exertion of mind or body.

She exerted herself to converse with the Mexican, and walked with him out upon the plain, where the Apache horses were grazing. Her bright bay was among them, and he pricked up his ears and whinneyed as he caught sight of her.

"I must confess to you that I came near shooting that horse yesterday," said Gutierrez. "If I had not known that the Apaches would cut off your escape, I would have shot him."

"It would have been a pity," replied Emilie. "He is a fine animal and a great pet."

"He is a dangerous horse, and I shall be afraid to let you ride him hereafter. With you upon his back, there is nothing but a bullet that will stop him. Did you train him yourself?"

"He is my pet, as I tell you. See how he will come to me."

She blew a silver whistle that was suspended from her neck by a slender steel chain. The horse came cantering up to her, rubbed his nose against her shoulder, and appeared to be delighted as she patted and fondled him.

"He is very gentle," said the Mexican; "but you would hardly attempt to ride him without a saddle."

"I can mount him without a saddle; but would not dare to ride him, except at a walk."

She got upon a boulder, called the horse to her, and seated herself on his back.

"You shall see how I can manage him," she said, as she walked him around Gutierrez, guiding him by her voice and by the pressure of her hands. Her seat appeared to be so insecure, during this performance, that she was several times on the point of falling off.

She widened her circles until she was some twenty yards from the Mexican, when she turned the horse's head toward the town on the bluff, spoke to him, and he started away like an arrow from the bow.

Gutierrez was so astonished at this proceeding, that he lost his presence of mind for an instant. Then he drew a pistol from his belt, and fired at the flying animal. The range was too great, or his aim was bad. The horse only lengthened his strides, and shot ahead more swiftly than before. It was remarkable, also, that Emilie now kept her seat without any apparent effort. In fact, the motion of the graceful animal was like that of a cradle, and she had often ridden him without saddle or bridle.

She soon perceived that a canyon lay between her and the bluff—a deep canyon, crossed by a natural bridge of rock, narrow, and without the slightest protection at the sides. As the horse's feet struck the bridge, she gave one glance down into the chasm, that filled her with terror,

and she involuntarily closed her eyes, to conquer the giddiness that came over her.

Not until the horse had crossed the bridge, and was ascending the steep path that led up the bluff, did she venture to raise her eyelids. Then she spoke to him, to moderate his speed, and looked back to see if she was pursued.

Gutierrez was so surprised by Emilie's unexpected escape, that he acted like a crazy man. He vainly attempted to catch a horse, when he had neither bridle nor lariat. Then he ran to the village, gave the alarm, and attempted to start the Indians in pursuit, but their mourning hullabaloo was under full headway, and they did not choose to be interrupted. Then he hastened back to the plain, where he could only impotently shake his fist at the girl as she climbed the bluff.

Emilie encouraged the horse to greater speed, but a revulsion of feeling came over her when she saw that she was not pursued. Her intense excitement was succeeded by a reaction that nearly prostrated her; but she kept her seat, clinging desperately to the horse, until she reached the summit of the bluff.

She saw two men running out to meet her. One of them was a white man, and his face seemed strangely familiar to her; but there was a mist over her eyes, her senses were deserting her, and she only knew that she was falling.

CHAPTER X.

THE PUEBLO PRINCESS.

COLLINS was completely exhausted when he had climbed out of the canyon with Coroa, and he sunk down upon the rock, incapable of further exertion. Coroa suffered him to rest a few moments, and then aroused him.

"The Apaches are coming back," he said; "my friend can see them if he wants to."

Collins crawled to the edge of the cliff, and looked down into the chasm. He shuddered as he saw the half-naked savages riding up the defile, and congratulated himself upon the remarkable providence that had delivered him from their hands.

Wishing to have a closer view of his enemies, he took out his pocket-telescope, and watched them as they passed. Perceiving that Coroa eyed the instrument wistfully and wonderingly, he adjusted it, and handed it to the lad. Coroa started back in amazement as he put it to his eye, and nearly dropped the glass. He soon became accustomed to it, although it was still wonderful to him and it gave him the name—Far Sight—by which he thereafter knew his white friend.

"They have given me up for dead," said Collins, "and they will not trouble themselves about me any more. Where will they go now?"

"They will go to their lodges, where they left their women and children, and we will follow them."

"Why will we follow them?"

"Because Coroa wishes to go to his own home, and wishes Far Sight to go with him."

"But I ought to return to my friends."

"It would be a hard journey without horses, and we might not find them where we left them. Coroa's town is near, and we will get horses there."

Collins suffered himself to be persuaded by his Indian friend, as he really did not feel able to walk any considerable distance, and the two set out across the plateau, the wind and sun drying their clothes, as they went.

"Where did you learn to talk English so well?" asked the officer, as they were conversing pleasantly on the way. "Did you ever live among the white men?"

"No; and white men are seldom seen in this country. I found one on a plain, while I was hunting, many years ago. He was alone, and had no gun, and was wounded and nearly starved for food and water. I brought him to my father's town, and took care of him until he was well and strong. I taught him the language of our people, and he taught me the language of the white men."

"What became of him?"

"He is still with us, and is a priest and a great medicine-man."

"What is his name?"

"We call him White Buffalo. We have never known him by any other name."

Collins further learned from the youth that the people dwelt in a town of great houses, built of stone and brick; that they cultivated the soil, and raised sheep and cattle; that they carried on some rude manufactures, and that they were peaceably inclined, never going to war except when forced to it by the imposition of neighboring tribes. Their government was hereditary, and had descended, on the death of their father, to Coroa and his sister Corella. Corella, who was several years older than her brother, was to act as chief or princess of the tribe, until Coroa should reach a certain age, and then he would relieve her of her authority.

These details, and many others that might not interest the reader, were highly interesting to Collins, serving to make the journey less tedious, and to while away the time until nightfall, when Coroa said that they must proceed with greater caution, as they were near the Apache encampment.

In fact, they could see the fires of a large Indian village on the plateau a short distance to the south, and Coroa thought it necessary to give them a wide berth, making a considerable circuit to keep out of the way of any wandering Apaches.

After a while, they came to a bluff, which they ascended partly by precipitous paths, and partly by steps cut into the rock. The ascent was quite toilsome, especially to Collins, who was obliged to pick his way very carefully in the darkness, often trusting to Coroa's guidance, and sometimes to the assistance of his arm.

When he had reached the summit, however, and had passed through an opening in a high wall, he thought himself well repaid for his labor and fatigue.

He was in a city—a city laid out with streets and squares, all closely lined with houses built of solid stone, mostly from two to four stories high, some of them higher. One, that seemed to stand in the center of the town, rose up grand and loftily as a castle.

It was a strange thing to Collins that there were no people moving in the streets, and that no lights were to be seen. It was yet more

strange that there were no doorways to any of the houses, or any other visible means of entrance.

Coroa led the way up the main street until he came to a house that was four stories in height, and of better appearance than its neighbors. From the top of this house to the ground there hung a flexible ladder, which Coroa ascended, motioning to Collins to follow him. When they reached the flat roof, they hauled up the ladder, and descended through a hole in the middle, by other ladders, to the second story of the building.

They passed several rooms, and entered one in which a light was burning in an earthenware vessel of peculiar shape. Coroa whistled shrilly, and an Indian woman entered, who made a low obeisance, and stood with her eyes fixed on the ground before him. He spoke to her in the language of his people, and she went out, returning presently with some cold meat, guavas, corn-bread and a pitcher of water. Coroa set the food before his friend, giving him to understand that nothing more was to be said or done until he had eaten.

Collins was glad to satisfy his appetite, as he had eaten nothing during the day, and he felt much refreshed when he had finished his meal. All he then needed was rest, and Coroa supplied him with a cotton mattress and blankets of fine wool, so that he slept with as much comfort as if he had been in a first-class hotel.

In the morning both were early astir, and Coroa took his friend down into the street; where Collins found enough to interest him, in the strange sights and sounds that greeted his eyes and ears.

They went to the large building in the center of the town, which seemed to have been intended for a temple or palace. In fact, it served both purposes. The entrance was by a broad flight of stone steps, and it did not differ materially from large houses in more civilized communities, except in the fact that it had no windows.

Entering a large hall, they found themselves in the presence of a number of young women, standing on each side of a low platform, on which was seated a person to whom the attention of the young officer was instantly attracted.

This person was a woman, beautiful in form and feature, and much lighter in complexion than any Indians the young officer had yet seen. The same was true of the other women in the hall, and there were some among them who were nearly white. Her dress was composed of fine materials and bright colors; but the most conspicuous garment was a tilma, or mantle, that hung from her shoulders. It was a white woolen fabric, and was beautifully embroidered, with a wide border and many fanciful devices. Her dark hair was tastefully arranged, being done up in rolls on each side of her head, with an eagle's feather at the part in the middle, fastened by a large gold pin.

Her attendants were dressed in similar style; but their garments were mostly composed of cotton cloth. There was but one man in the room—a white man, with a long white beard, clad in a flowing white robe, leaning on a long, two-edged sword. He bowed to Coroa as he

entered, and looked eagerly at Collins, but did not speak.

Collins was sure that this woman, who could not be more than twenty-five years old, was the princess sister of whom Coroa had spoken. Coroa spoke to her in his own language, frequently pointing toward his friend. When the youth had finished his "talk," she bestowed upon Collins a pleasant smile, accompanied by a searching, earnest gaze, as if she wished to read his heart.

She addressed him in Spanish, remarking that she spoke very little English, thanking him for having saved the life of her brother, tendering him the hospitality of the town, and offering him any assistance that it might be in her power to render him.

Collins, who was a good Spanish scholar, replied that his wants were few, that he had escaped from the Apaches; and only needed a horse to carry him back to his friends, with some provisions for the way.

"The Apaches are our kindred," said Corella, "and we must not displease them. But they believe you to be dead, and they need not know that you are alive. You shall have what you ask, after awhile."

She requested Coroa to take his friend through the town, as she had other matters to attend to at that time, and watched the tall and manly form of the officer until he had left the building.

Coroa took his friend to the east end of the street, where they ascended to the flat roof of a house, from which they had an excellent view of the surrounding country.

With the aid of his spy-glass, Collins was carefully noting the features of the country, when he saw something that caused him to utter an exclamation of surprise.

Emerging from behind a belt of timber were four figures on horseback. Collins took a long look at them, watching them until they were within half a mile of the bluff that formed the southern limit of the plateau, when he handed the glass to his friend.

"They are white people, of course?" said Coroa.

"Yes; I can tell that by their dress, although I cannot distinguish their faces. One of them is a woman, and her form seems strangely familiar to me; but it cannot be possible that it is Emilie!"

"It is a white woman."

"That is certain; but it surely cannot be *her*! They are going into danger. What has become of the Apache warriors?"

"They are not at the village. They must be under the bluff, but I cannot see them. What is the matter with the white people? What are they doing?"

Collins took the glass, and saw that one of the white men had turned, and was facing the other two with a loaded gun, and that the woman was riding rapidly toward the east. Then a cloud of mounted Apaches came out from under the bluff, spreading toward the south. Two of the white men went off as fast as their horses could carry them, and the woman returned to the remaining white man. In a few moments the Indians surrounded the latter two, and appeared

to enter into an amicable conversation with the man.

"These people seem to be friendly enough," said Collins. "I don't understand it at all. I can't even guess at what it means. What will the Apaches do now, Coroa?"

"They must get on this side of the stream to reach the horse-path that will take them up the bluff to the village, and they cannot cross until the water falls."

"When will the water be low enough to let them cross?"

"Perhaps to-night—perhaps in the morning. I can hardly tell."

"I must wait, then; there is no help for it."

"For what must Far Sight wait?"

"I must know who that woman is, but nothing can be done now."

"Let us go to my sister. Corella said that I must soon bring you back to her."

CHAPTER XI.

EMILIE AS A SISTER.

If Charles Collins had not been in love, and if he had not been tortured by anxiety concerning his loved one, his first day in the Moqui town would have been very pleasant to him. If he had been a gentleman of leisure, an amateur hunter, or a scientific traveler, he would have, indeed, felt that his lines had fallen in pleasant places.

As the friend of Coroa, he was entertained in the most sumptuous manner that was possible to those simple people. He was shown their feasts, their dances, their religious ceremonies, their masquerades. Nothing was considered too good for him, and everything for which he could hint a wish was furnished to him, except a horse and provisions for his journey, and he was not quite sure, now, that he wanted the horse and provisions.

It was as the friend of Corella, also, that he was entertained. He could not disguise from himself the fact that the Pueblo princess looked upon him with favorable eyes. She could hardly allow him out of her sight for a moment, and seemed determined to take advantage of every opportunity of conversing with him in that melodious Spanish tongue with which both were acquainted.

Who was that woman whom he had seen on the plain, with that man who appeared to be on such good terms with the Apaches? The form and the attire reminded him forcibly of Emilie de Manville, and he even fancied that he could distinguish her features; but that would have been impossible at that distance.

Much as he desired to investigate the mystery, he could find no opportunity that day to do anything in the matter, and he was obliged to admit that it would not have been worth while to make the attempt, as he had been assured by Coroa that the Apaches could not reach their village before night or the next morning.

At night he confided his trouble to Coroa, who promised him that he should not lack an opportunity of pursuing his investigation, and who arose with him at an early hour in the morning. As Corella had not given orders that the stranger should be forcibly detained, they

had no difficulty in making their way out of the building.

They went direct to the house from which they had made their observations the previous day, and mounted the roof.

It was evident, from the unusual smoke in the village, that the warriors were there, though none of them were astir at that hour. After a while, as day dawned, they began to make their appearance by ones and twos and threes, and presently in larger groups.

Suddenly Collins, who was looking through his glass, dropped it upon his lap, and grasped Coroa's arm convulsively.

"It is she!" he exclaimed. "What, in the name of Heaven, does this mean?"

He took up the glass again, only to drop it with another exclamation, in which there was more anger than surprise.

"That wretch! That rascally Mexican! What can she be doing in his company, of all men in the world?"

Coroa took the glass.

"Does Far Sight know who that man is?" he asked.

"I know but little of him, and that little is not in his favor."

"It is Senor Pablo."

"And who is Senor Pablo?"

"He is a Mexican. White Buffalo calls him a renegade. Our people call him the White Apache. He spies out the weakest and richest places in Mexico, and guides the Apaches to them when they go south to rob and murder. He disguises himself as an Indian when he goes on these expeditions, so that the Mexicans shall not know him, and they do not suspect him."

"That is horrible, and it is more horrible to me that she should be with such a man. Was she playing with me, and was that wretch really her favored lover?"

"Far Sight does not know all," suggested Coroa. "Perhaps Senor Pablo has carried her away from the camp at the river."

"I know enough, and too much. If he carried her away, it must have been with her own consent. They are friendly enough now. See, Coroa! she has mounted her horse, and is putting him through his paces for his amusement! He is admiring the performance, and I hope that his admiration satisfies her. Ha! What does that mean?"

The horse had started away, with tremendous strides, in the direction of the bluff. The Mexican was seen to draw and fire a pistol, but the bay only increased his speed.

"He is running away with her," said Collins, bitterly, as if he thought she deserved it.

"Has the Great Father taken away the mind of Far Sight?" exclaimed Coroa. "She is escaping! Come! we will go and meet her."

They descended the ladder, and hastened to the head of the only path by which Emilie could reach the town; but this required time, and she was nearly at the summit of the bluff when they again came in sight of her.

The speed of the horse had slackened considerably; but a faintness had come over Emilie, and she seemed about to fall from his back. Collins rushed forward, and caught her as she slipped

off, just at the edge of the frightful precipice. The horse went galloping into the town.

Collins carried Emilie within the wall, where he made some awkward and ineffectual attempts to revive her; but he was thrust aside by a man who had just come up—the gray-bearded white man, in the long white robe, whom he had seen at the temple.

"It is White Buffalo," whispered Coroa. "Let him do what he wishes."

White Buffalo laid Emilie on the smooth white stone, with her head low, and chafed her hands vigorously. Soon she opened her eyes, they rested on Collins, and a smile spread over her countenance.

"Emilie!" exclaimed the officer. "Speak to me, Emilie!"

"Charles! Are you really alive? They told me that you were dead. I have suffered terribly."

Collins now began to understand how matters really stood, and he easily comprehended the brief account of her adventures that Emilie was soon able to give him. In return, he told her how he had escaped from the Apaches, by means of a flooded canyon and Coroa.

White Buffalo, who had been gazing intently at Emilie, seized Collins by the arm, and impulsively led him away a short distance.

"Tell me, young man," he said, "and for God's sake tell me truly and quickly! Who is that girl?"

"Her name is Emilie de Manville."

"Her father's name?"

"Armand de Manville."

"Is he living?"

"He was the leader of the party that was attacked in camp by the Apaches, when I was captured, and he was alive when I last saw him."

"Do you love that girl?"

"I do, with all my heart and soul."

"You are mistaken. You do not love her, except as a sister. In fact, she is your sister."

"What do you mean?"

"Corella has set her fancy upon you. You cannot have failed to notice this. She will give you no horse to take you to the river. She wishes to keep you here. If she should know that you love this girl, she might shut her up in a dungeon, or might even send her back to the Apaches. She is fierce in her passions, and would be a terrible woman if her jealousy was aroused. Emilie de Manville must pass as your sister."

"What interest have you in her, or in me, that you give us this advice?"

"Emilie de Manville is my brother's child. When he went to California, he left me to sell some property in Louisiana, and to bring him the proceeds. I set out for California a little more than two years ago. On the way my party was attacked by Apaches, who murdered all but one—unless they may have spared the life of my daughter, and have carried her away a captive. I escaped, but was badly wounded and unarmed, and would have perished had it not been for Coroa, who found me and brought me here. I have remained here, hoping that my child may be alive, and that I may gain some tidings of her. I have nothing else to live for."

"I must explain this to Emilie," said Collins. He did so, making no mention of the possible jealousy of Corella, merely requesting her, for a reason that he would make known at some future time, to be content to pass as his sister while they should remain in that place, and telling her the story of White Buffalo, who had advised this course.

Emilie embraced her uncle, whom she had not seen for several years, and who was so changed that she did not recognize him.

"You promised me, Charles," she said, "that you would be my brother, and of course I must be your sister."

Collins looked as if he could wish the relation to be a closer one, but only replied by pressing her hand.

"What shall we do now?" he asked. "Can we not escape from here?"

White Buffalo shook his head.

"We must go to Corella," he said. "She will soon know that Emilie is here, and will seek for her if we do not take her to the temple. Besides, this young gentleman is watched, and she is expecting him. You must content yourselves as well as you can, until a plan can be contrived for your escape."

Corella received the officer with some indications of displeasure. She was vexed because he had not sooner presented himself before her, and was troubled at the appearance of Emilie.

Collins hastened to explain that Emilie was his sister, who had been captured by the Apaches, from whom she had just escaped. He related the manner of her escape, and begged that the princess would extend her hospitality to his sister, as she had extended it to him, until both could get an opportunity to rejoin their friends.

"Your sister is quite unlike you. Her hair and eyes are very dark, while yours are light."

"Coroa is your brother," replied the officer, "and his complexion is much lighter than yours."

"Does she speak Spanish?"

Emilie did not speak Spanish, and Collins was glad that she did not.

"Your sister is not well," continued Corella, looking severely at Emilie, who seemed about to swoon again. "We must take care of her, and it will be necessary to separate her from you for a while."

Collins was about to protest against this procedure; but a glance from White Buffalo, who had taken his station near the princess, caused him to desist from his purpose, and he simply thanked Corella for her kindness.

Turning to the old man, she requested him to take charge of Emilie, to administer proper remedies to her, to provide for all her wants and, above all, to keep her secure.

Collins explained this to Emilie, who followed White Buffalo without the least hesitation.

CHAPTER XII.

CORELLA'S DIPLOMACY.

THE remainder of the day, after he had introduced his "sister" to the Pueblo princess, was not passed pleasantly by the young officer, although he exerted himself to entertain Corella and to keep her in good humor.

He had found Emilie, but was separated from her and the position was one of embarrassment, if not actual peril. He could only trust to Emilie's uncle to bring them out of their present difficulty, and it was possible that White Buffalo's will might exceed his ability to aid them.

There was another subject that troubled him, and that demanded his immediate attention—attention that it was not in his power to give. Mr. De Manville, as soon as he discovered that Emilie, had been taken away from the camp at the river, would undoubtedly follow the trail with all the force he could get, and it was probable that he was not, at that time, far from the pueblo. Gutierrez and the Apaches would be expecting him and watching for him, and there was reason to believe that his party might be ambushed and destroyed.

Collins could think of no way of averting this probable disaster, except to employ one of the Pueblo Indians as a scout, and to send him out to intercept the party and give them information of the true state of affairs. As soon as an opportunity offered, he asked advice and assistance of Coroa, who at once relieved him of his embarrassment by volunteering to take the scouting duty upon himself.

Soon after Coroa had departed on his errand, the alarm was raised that the Apache warriors had left their village in a body, and were coming toward the bluff, with the supposed intention of entering the town.

This would not have been alarming intelligence—the Apaches being of the same race as the Moquis and on friendly terms with them—if it had not been connected with the escape of Emilie. When the further information was brought that the White Apache was at the head of the warriors, Corella and Lieutenant Collins well knew what was the object of the expedition. The intention could only be to demand the surrender of Emilie, and the Apaches evidently supposed that they were coming in sufficient strength to enforce their demand.

Whatever action the Pueblo princess might be disposed to take in the case of Emilie, she was determined that the Apaches should not gain possession of Collins, whom she put in charge of an old Indian, with directions to keep him concealed and secure.

The young officer did not relish the idea of being placed in confinement; but he had no alternative but submission, and submitted as gracefully as he could.

Having taken care of the white man, Corella turned her attention to the red-men, and gave directions to some of her warriors, who busied themselves in preparations to receive properly their expected guests, whether their errand should be peaceful or hostile.

The Apaches, with Gutierrez at their head, accompanied by Mathiolo and Wolf's Head, entered the town, and marched up the principal street in warlike array, making an imposing appearance. They halted in front of the temple, and Gutierrez, with his two supporters, ascended the steps to the grand hall, where Corella was seated in state, ready to receive them.

As usual among this singular people, nothing could be done or said until the strangers had

eaten, and meat and vegetables were at once brought and set before them. The two chiefs ate as ravenously as Apaches always do when they can get anything to eat; but Gutierrez was so eager to regain possession of Emilie, that his anxiety left him no appetite. When they were satisfied with eating, Corella made a little speech in her own language, which, as it was a dialect of the Apache tongue, they well understood.

She spoke of the pleasure of herself and her people at receiving a visit from their cousins, the Apaches, who had never before come to visit them in such state and in so large a body. She regretted that they had not brought their women and children, who would have been delighted to get a nearer view of the great houses of the Pueblos. She also regretted that she had not sooner known of the intended visit, so that she might have prepared food for all the warriors. She complimented the chiefs highly upon their wisdom and prudence, and the Apache nation at large upon their ability as appropriators of other people's scalps and property. In conclusion she asked the chiefs whether a special motive had brought them to the town at that time, or whether the visit was merely one of courtesy and friendship.

There was considerable diplomacy in this speech. The speaker, like some civilized diplomats, having put the ambassadors in good humor by means of a dinner, was desirous of still further conciliating them by well-timed and well-toned compliments. Like other diplomats, she had been more lavish of her flattery than was consistent with a strict regard for truth.

Gutierrez wished to reply to her speech; but he could not take the words out of the mouth of Mathiolo, who had risen to deliver himself of a talk.

Mathiolo believed himself to be a profound diplomatist—one who was not to be overcome by a woman. He made a wordy and discursive harangue, whose length was only equaled by its prosiness, and which doubtless pleased the princess very well, if, as was probable, her object was to gain time. After repaying her compliments with interest, he said that the Apaches had come to visit their cousins for the purpose of inquiring concerning a white girl, a prisoner, who had been captured by their friend, Senor Pablo, and who had escaped from them to the town of the Pueblos.

Corella replied in a long speech, in which there was a great deal calculated to exalt the Apaches in their own esteem, but not a word concerning Emilie.

This drew forth some more remarks from the chief, prompted by Gutierrez, at the close of which he asked, in straightforward language, what had become of the girl, and demanded that she should be given up to the Apaches and their friend.

Corella was well aware, as she told Mathiolo, that a stranger had come into the town, and that the stranger was a white girl; but she had not asked her where she had come from or to whom she belonged. For her own part, the princess had only exercised the duties of hospitality toward a stranger in distress, and had

considered it unbecoming to ask questions. If the friend of the Apaches could show a just claim upon the girl, she would be glad to buy her from him, as she had taken a fancy to her, and would give him a good bargain.

The Mexican jumped up, and indignantly declared that he would not sell his prisoner, or part with her on any terms. The discussion, he said, had already been uselessly prolonged. There had been a great deal said, but little to the purpose. The white girl was his prisoner, a fact for which his statement and that of Mathiolo should be sufficient warrant. He had a rightful claim upon her, and insisted that she should be immediately surrendered to him.

"Is her brother still with the Apaches?" inquired Corella.

Mathiolo disclaimed all knowledge of the white girl's brother, and Gutierrez denied that she had a brother.

"She told me that she had a brother, and that he had been captured by the Apaches," said the princess, who proceeded to give a description of Collins that was quite accurate, showing that she had not failed to observe him closely.

Mathiolo admitted that a person of that description had been taken prisoner by the Apaches, who had been obliged to leave him in a canyon during the rain, and he had doubtless been swept away and drowned by the flood.

The Mexican said that he knew the fellow very well, and that he was not the brother of the white girl, or in any way related to her. He was one of the *malditos soldados* of the *Yanquis, hereticos, hijos del diabolo*, and he (Gutierrez) hoped that he had been swept away to eternal perdition.

Corella had overshot her mark. Her love had proved too much for her diplomacy. Anxious to know whether Emilie was really Collins's sister, she made the inquiry without thinking what it might lead to, and had let Gutierrez into a secret. The Mexican instantly perceived that Emilie could not have known of the capture of Collins, unless she had seen him after her escape, and he jumped to the conclusion that the officer had been miraculously preserved from the flood, and had found his way to the town of the Pueblos. Mathiolo's brain was too dull to hit upon such a train of reasoning, and the Mexican kept his own counsel. He wished, first of all, to get possession of Emilie, and the affair of Collins might be settled thereafter.

He became more urgent in his demands that the girl should be given up to him, while Corella continued her evasive replies, asking for time to think of the matter, and promising to give a decisive answer the next day.

This was not at all to the taste of Gutierrez, who grew impatient, and blustered considerably. In one respect Corella had the advantage of him—she could control her temper better than he could control his. As his anger increased, she became aggravatingly cool and self-complacent, until at last he burst forth in a storm of wrath, declaring that his demand must be instantly complied with, and that Emilie must be delivered to him without any further words, or he would order the warriors in the

street to attack the town, and he would not then be responsible for the consequences.

The blood mounted to Corella's face. She rose to her full height, and her form seemed to dilate, while her eyes fairly flashed fire. She raised her arm, and the doors of the temple, consisting of two thick slabs of stone, were rolled together and fastened. She waved her hand, and fifty warriors darted out from recesses in the sides of the hall, armed with bows and arrows, lances, and heavy knives similar to the machetos of Mexico and Central America.

At the same moment the house-tops on each side of the street became alive with armed warriors.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE IMPRESSED GUIDES.

SANDY BILL and his "pard" were glad enough to get away from the Apaches, although they lost the "shiners" which Gutierrez had promised them, as well as those which he had not promised them. As soon as they caught sight of the half-naked savages, coming out at full speed from under the bluff, they did not "stand upon the order of their going," but struck a bee-line, in the direction that the Mexican's leveled rifle pointed out to them.

They had not gone far when they looked back, and then they discovered, to their great surprise, that no attempt was made to pursue them. They also perceived that Gutierrez was on friendly terms with the Apaches, and appeared to be fraternizing with them.

Sandy Bill shook his head over the matter, and his "pard" looked knowing, as if an idea had worked its way through his shaggy hair and his thick skull.

"I've been beat afore now, old pard," said Bill, with a melancholy air, as he brought his horse down to a walk; "but I don't remember any time when I've been quite so bad beat as that chap has beat us. I wouldn't hev minded it so much, ef I hadn't drawed a bead on it fur a dead sure thing. It goes ag'in' the grain with me to miss a sure thing, Sam, and then to be backed out and cowed down is a leetle too much. I wouldn't hev keered fur him and his durned shootin'-iron. I'd hev fixed a dead-fall fur him tol'able quick, ef he hadn't had the cussed Apaches to back him."

"Don't be too sart'in of that, ole hoss," rejoined Sam Hinks. "D'ye know who that chap is?"

"Some durned Greaser."

"But what durned Greaser?"

"Ef you know, you know more'u I do."

"I've had an idee a-workin' through my head, and it's got out at last. Didn't you notice how well he knew this yar' kentry—from the start—every foot of it—better'n we did, by a long jump?"

"Yaas."

"And how well he guessed what we war up to, and fixed his plans to sarcumvent us?"

"Yaas."

"And how well he knew jist whar the Injuns war, while we didn't hev the least idee of tha'r bein' about?"

"Yaas."

"And how he croneyed in with the 'Paches

right straight, and all war serene and lovely between 'em?"

"Yaas—and now, what of it?"

"Thar's on'y one Greaser as that coat'll fit, and that Greaser is Senor Pablo."

"The White Apache! You've hit center this time, Sam Hinks, ef you never did afore. I warn't a-thinkin' o' that cuss."

"But I war, Bill, and you needn't call me a fool ag'in for a day or two. He's a powerful hard chap to head, and we war lucky to git off as well as we did."

"Shouldn't wonder ef we war; but this child don't like the way the keards were stacked ag'in us, and he's got a hankerin' to try the Greaser another game, and git even with him."

Wishing to make their way to the river, the Texans returned by nearly the same route over which they had come, keeping a sharp lookout until near nightfall, when Sandy Bill proposed to camp, saying that he knew a "hole" close by where there was wood and water, and where they would not be in danger of being discovered by the people from the camp, if they should be following the trail.

They found the "hole," and went into camp, where we will leave them, while we note the proceedings of Mr. De Manville and his friends.

While the storm lasted, Mr. De Manville was very impatient, and anxious to set out in search of his child. When the rain had ceased, a cache was prepared, in which his valuables were concealed, and his wagons were drawn up into one of the fissures of the rugged table-land, where it was hoped they would not be discovered. All traces were obliterated as well as possible, although the ground was so wet that it seemed hardly worth while to attempt to conceal anything.

Corporal Williams and his man assisted in this work, and remained at the camp an hour or so after the other party had left, waiting for the water to run off, and for the ground to become passable for wagons.

De Manville's party consisted of himself, Bob Nocks, Jack Harber, the Shawnee, and his own two men. They had great difficulty in getting the right start, as the rain had washed out the tracks of the party they were pursuing, except in places where the hoof-marks happened to be unusually deep.

If it had not been for the skill and patience of Bob Nocks, who assumed, by common consent, the leadership of the party, they would have been compelled to abandon their attempt. When the trail was lost, his experience, or his instinct, enabled him to judge in what direction it would probably be found, and his judgment was seldom at fault. When he failed to find the trail where he expected to find it, the party were dismounted, and scattered in different directions to search for it. The man who found "sign" would signal to his companions, and the line of march would again be taken up.

This was slow and tedious work, irritating to Mr. De Manville, and unpleasant to the others. It was rendered yet slower and more tedious by the fact that there were watercourses where there had been none the previous day, and other obstructions caused by the storm, which sometimes threw them entirely out of the track,

causing them to make long and tiresome circuits. They had, however, daylight to travel in, and their time was rather better than that which those they were pursuing had made at night.

As dusk came on, the tall trapper rode ahead of his friends, to look out for a suitable camping-ground, wishing to find a dry spot among the rocks, where wood and water could be procured, and where they would not be obliged to lie down in the wet.

He soon returned, making signals to his companions to halt, and keep silence.

"What is the matter, now?" asked De Manville, as Bob rode up to the party.

"I've found 'em, sir, or part of 'em."

"The people we are looking for?"

"I've found them two Texas chaps, anyhow. They're gone into camp down yonder in the rocks, jest in the place I war a-huntin'. You'll hev to stay yer, Mr. Manville, and hold the hosses, while the rest of us go down yonder and gobble 'em."

Mr. De Manville objected to doing duty as a horse-holder; but the word of the tall trapper was law for the time, and he submitted, while Bob Nocks led the others to the "hole" in which the Texans had camped for the night, and which he had discovered by the smoke of their fire.

The only entrance to the "hole" was by a narrow passage through which ran the water of the little spring that bubbled up within. The top of the "hole" was nearly closed, and the hiding-place was one that could not be discovered, unless it should be accidentally stumbled upon. Believing themselves secure, the Texans had built a fire and cooked their supper, and were smoking their pipes, preparatory to enjoying a good night's rest.

Bob Nocks placed two of his men to guard the entrance, and station himself and the other two at the top of the "hole," where they looked down, with leveled rifles, upon the unsuspecting smokers.

A hail, and a summons to surrender, was the first intimation the Texans had of the presence of their pursuers, and they at once started up and seized their rifles.

"Better leave the shootin'-irons alone," said the tall trapper. "We're got you foul, and thar's no use in kickin'. That young canyon is shet tight, and you kin see what's the matter with us up yar."

Cornered as the Texans were, they could not hope to gain anything by resistance; but Sandy Bill thought that he saw a way out of the scrape, and set his wits to work to do some "tall lying."

"Is that you, Bob!" he exclaimed, with well-feigned surprise and delight. "You're jest the man I was wantin' to see. You needn't come at us as of we war Injuns, 'cause it's on'y me and my pard. Step down yar, ole hoss, and let's hev a smoke and a talk."

Not at all deceived by the Texan's words, or manner, the tall trapper sent a man for Mr. De Manville and the horses, and then descended into the "hole" with the rest of his men.

"Reckon you ain't any more glad to see us than we are to come up on you," he said, after

lighting his pipe, and listening to Sandy Bill's protestations of joy at the meeting. "We'd like to know, afore you shoot off any more of that jaw at us, what you hev done with the gal that you and the Greaser kerried off?"

The Texan's eyes opened wide, with an expression of utter astonishment and injured innocence.

"Is that the way you fix it up?" he asked. "Why, Bob, you're jest as much mistaken as ef you'd shot tough ole bull fur fat young cow. We're the very chaps as hev been huntin' her, and that's jest what I want to tell you about."

The Texan's story must be condensed for the reader. One lie led to another, and he had not had time to straighten the matter up in his own mind. His narrative, therefore, was full of circumlocutions and digressions, made for the purpose of giving his invention time to work.

He admitted that he had told the teamsters to go to sleep, as he and his "pard" intended to watch during the night. After awhile the Mexican, saying that they looked tired and stupid, had produced a bottle of liquor, with which he invited them to refresh themselves. They had willingly consented, and he was free to confess that they had drunk like thirsty men. The liquor, without doubt, was drugged, for they immediately fell into a sound sleep, and when they awoke, the Mexican and the girl were gone. Straightway they caught their horses, took some provisions and ammunition from the wagons, and set out in pursuit. They followed the trail closely, and came up with the fugitives just as they joined a large body of Apaches, with whom the Mexican appeared to be on very friendly terms. As the ingenuous Texans could not think of measuring strength with two or three hundred Apaches, they turned back to seek assistance.

Sandy Bill's story would have been quite plausible if it had been told to men who were not acquainted with him or the facts, and if there had not been one serious hitch in the narrative. When he was asked why he had not aroused the teamsters when he discovered the disappearance of Emilie, and before he set out in pursuit of the Mexican, he could only answer, with suspicious hesitation, that he was too hurried and excited to think of the teamsters.

"Glad to know that you've been so smart," said the tall trapper. "Wouldn't hev thort it of sech chaps as you. You're jest the men we want now to take us to the place whar the Mexican and the gal j'ined the 'Paches."

"What'll the old man give?" asked Sandy Bill. "We've about done our sheer fur nothin'."

"He'll give you your lives if you do the fa'r thing now. Ef you try to lead us into any trap, you'll go under slicker'n grease. Thar, now; you needn't git r'iled. My words are words with the bark on, and thar ain't nothin' more to be said about it."

When the line of march was formed for the next morning's journey, Bob Nocks and De Manville rode in front: next came the Texans, with a man on each flank; and Jack Harber and the Shawnee brought up the rear. The Texans pointed out the course to be taken, and the tall trapper, while he followed their directions, did

not fail to keep an eye on the trail which they had left in returning.

"That fellow told a rather plausible story," said De Manville, as he and Bob Nocks were riding somewhat in advance of the party. "Do you believe any part of it?"

"I'd believe him jest as quick as I'd believe a sheep-killin' dog that I'd see comin' out of a field with blood on his jaws, and he'd sw'ar he hadn't tasted sheep-meat fur a month of Sundays. That Sandy Bill lies, and he knows that I know he lies. But he's got to show us whar he left the gal and the Mexican, and then we'll make them both useful, unless they run away, which they may do, as we kain't afford to watch 'em then."

As they approached the place where the Texans had turned back, a sharp lookout was kept for Apaches, and Bob Nocks discovered the head of an Indian, that was thrust out from behind a tree in advance of them, as if reconnoitering the party. The Indian, knowing that he was observed, or having completed his reconnaissance, stepped out and made signs of friendship.

"Thar's on'y one," said the tall trapper, "and he kain't harm us. Ee hain't got the 'Pache look about him, neither."

As the Indian's signs of amity were answered, he hastened toward the party, and was gladly recognized as Coroa, the Pueblo prince.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SLIP 'TWIXT CUP AND LIP.

THE Apaches in the street in front of the temple were taken completely by surprise when they found themselves threatened by a formidable array of armed men from the adjoining house-tops. They felt that they could do nothing against superior numbers with such advantage of position, and they had received no orders from their leader, who was now shut up within the temple. There was no course left them, then, but to keep quiet and look as innocent as possible, like a cat that had been detected while meditating a raid upon the inmate of a bird-cage.

Gutierrez, however, was by no means disposed to take the matter so calmly and philosophically. He chose to consider that he had been insulted, that his dignity had been outraged, and he sprung toward the door, angrily demanding that it should be opened.

"Does the White Apache suppose that the Pueblos are fools?" disdainfully replied Corella. "Does he think that I will open the doors so that he may go out and tell the warriors of the Apache to murder my people? If the doors should be opened, he would only see that those warriors are at the mercy of the Pueblos, who would slay them all if I should direct them to do so."

"We have no wish to harm our cousins, the Apaches," continued Corella, addressing herself to Mathialo and Wolf's Head, who had quietly accepted the situation, and were looking as demure as if they had never in their lives harbored a wrong thought. "We desire to live in peace with them, and have no wish to deprive them of anything that rightfully belongs to them. I have admitted that the white girl is

here, and have requested Señor Pablo to prove his claim to her. I have offered to purchase her from him; but he is not willing to sell her. I ask only a day in which to think of this matter, and desire him to take time to think of it also. Let him come at the close of that time, and then, if he proves his claim, I believe that I can make a proposition which he will be glad to accept."

Poor Corella! For a long time she had known no law but her own will, and her passions were not accustomed to be controlled. She had set her heart upon the handsome white man, the *guero*, who had been accidentally thrown in her way, and she was determined to keep him. She wanted time, only that she might again speak to him and secure his allegiance by the threat of giving up Emilie to the Apaches. If he should consent to her terms, she would tell Gutierrez that the girl had escaped, feeling confident that the Apaches would not make a serious difficulty for the sake of the Mexican.

While she was thus playing double, the chances were largely against her, and the strength of her game lay only in the fact of possession, which, as every civilized person knows, is nine points of the law.

Gutierrez, considering the matter more coolly, was convinced that he had better comply with her request. He had discovered her weak point, and intended to take advantage of it. He would have a private interview with her, and would give her to understand that Emilie must be surrendered to him or he would inform the Apaches of the presence of Lieutenant Collins. They would inevitably demand him as their prisoner, and his retention by Corella would provoke a war, in the course of which the Pueblos would be shut up in their town, and would be otherwise annoyed and harassed, until they would be glad to come to terms. He believed that the game was in his own hands, and that he only needed to play carefully.

He put on his mildest and most insinuating manner as he approached Corella, bowed meekly before her, and asked pardon for his violent conduct. He knew of her wisdom, he said, and had no doubt of her desire to act justly and fairly. He willingly acceded to her request for time to consider the matter, and would come alone, if she pleased, the next day, to speak with her concerning the white girl.

The princess was gratified by his graceful submission, and assured him that he would be received whenever he should be pleased to visit her.

The heavy doors of the temple were rolled apart, the armed Pueblos suddenly disappeared from the hall and the house-tops, and Gutierrez and the chiefs went out to the warriors, whom they led peaceably out of the town and back to their village.

By the time Corella had got rid of the Apaches the night was well advanced; but she felt that she could not sleep until she had seen Collins and tried the effect of her strategy upon him.

She ordered the doors of the temple to be closed, and sent for him.

The attendant who was sent came back and reported that the apartment in which he had

been confined was open, and that no prisoner was there.

Surprised and disturbed by this intelligence, she sent for the white girl, and a similar report was brought to her concerning Emilie.

She then ordered that White Buffalo should be called into her presence; but White Buffalo could be found nowhere in the temple.

Troubled and angry, she went to the rooms in which the prisoners had been confined, taking several of her attendants with her. She found that all that had been reported to her was true; that Collins and Emilie were gone, and that White Buffalo had also disappeared.

There was no means of exit from the temple, except through the hall, and they had certainly not gone out that way. They must, therefore, still be concealed somewhere in the building; but every room in the temple—and there were many—was searched to no purpose.

Believing, at last, that they must have escaped in some unaccountable manner, Corella took her measures with her accustomed promptness and energy. She had all the warriors in the town called to arms, and sent parties in all directions to search for the missing prisoners and for White Buffalo, who, she declared, must surely have been implicated in their escape.

In this supposition she was not mistaken. If it had not been for White Buffalo their escape could not have been effected. He had taken care of Emilie as he had been directed to do, and had concealed her so well that Corella could not have found her if she had determined to surrender her to the Apaches. When Collins was led away from the hall, the old man had exercised his authority over the guards, promising to be responsible for the prisoner, and had taken him to the place where he had concealed Emilie. There he had left them, after telling them that he hoped soon to assist them to make their escape, and had gone to attend to another duty, which was of great importance.

Passing into a dark recess in the rear of the building, he pulled, by means of a ring that was fastened to it, a large stone from the base of the wall, disclosing an opening through which a man could easily crawl. He passed out of this opening into the street into the rear of the temple, and replaced the stone. After looking carefully about, he whistled, and a dark figure came out from the shadow of an adjoining house, and approached him.

"Is it really you, Coroa?" he joyfully exclaimed. "It is fortunate, indeed, that you have returned soon. I can only hope, now, that you succeeded in performing your task."

"I found the white people, my father," replied Coroa, "and was lucky enough to find them before they were discovered by the Apaches. I brought them across the creek, and around through the big canyon to the west side of the town, where they are hid, and where they will remain until we can take Far Sight and the white maiden to join them."

White Buffalo complimented the youth upon his skill and sagacity, and related to him the events that had occurred during his absence, including the arrival of the Apaches and Senor Pablo.

"Whatever we mean to do must be done

now," said Coroa. "We have no time to lose. I think my sister believes that the white maiden is not the sister of Far Sight, and that he is trying to deceive her. She may learn the truth from Senor Pablo, and may be so angry that she will give up the white maiden to the Apaches. That would take away the heart from Far Sight."

"If Corella should want to give her up, she would not be able to find her; but, as you say, we must waste no time. They must escape tonight. They will need ladders and ropes to help them down the bluff."

"Everything is ready."

"Then they will soon be here."

The old man returned into the temple, where he released Emilie and Collins, and led them to the secret entrance.

"I arranged this passage several months ago," he said, as he removed the stone. "I thought that it might at some time be useful to me, but never expected that it would aid my brother's child."

Collins gladly greeted Coroa, and Emilie was overjoyed to learn that her father was near at hand, and waiting for her. She urged her friends to go and meet him without any delay, and they were glad enough to comply with her request.

They passed through the streets without being molested, probably without being noticed, and reached the west side of the town, where Coroa had left the two rifles that he had brought from De Manville's camp, with a flexible ladder and a lariat.

Then commenced the descent of the bluff, which was a tedious and difficult operation. The ladder was first brought into requisition, to enable them to reach a ledge which was used as a sheepfold. From this ledge they descended, by steps cut in the rock, to a larger ledge, where it was necessary to lower Emilie, by means of the lariat, to the next landing-place, and the others climbed down the rope. Then a steep path brought them to the foot of the bluff, ladder and lariat being left where they were used, as it was impossible to detach them.

"The worst is over, now," said Collins, looking back at the bluff.

"I am not so sure of that," replied Coroa. "The Apaches have placed sentinels all around the town; but I noticed them as I came back, and know where to find them. There is one but a short distance from here, and you must be quiet while I look after him."

Leaving his rifle in charge of Collins, the youth crept silently away, and was soon out of sight among the rocks and ravines.

In a few moments a stifled cry was heard, followed by a heavy fall, and Collins rushed forward, leaving the old man to follow with Emilie.

Coroa had crept unawares to the Apache sentinel, and had killed him with a blow of his knife, throwing the body into a ravine. When Collins and the others came up, he told them to hurry forward, as they could then reach the canyon without further interruption.

But Gutierrez had taken the precaution to double the line of sentinels, and the whiz of an arrow told the fugitives that they were not yet

out of danger. Collins, who had caught sight of the Apache, leveled his rifle, and fired, bringing him to the ground before he could fit another arrow to his bow.

The crack of the rifle resounded among the rocks and ravines, and yell after yell was heard, as the Apache sentinels communicated the intelligence to each other. At the same time lights were seen on the bluff, and a confused noise was heard, as if the whole town had been suddenly set astir.

CHAPTER XV.

FLYING AND FIGHTING.

COROA and his companions hastened on as fast as the nature of the ground would allow, and soon reached their friends, who were concealed in the big canyon. Mr. De Manville was overjoyed at recovering his daughter, but was hardly better pleased than was Bob Nocks at the sight of Lieutenant Collins.

"Here is a man, father, to whom we owe our liberty," said Emilie. "We could not have escaped without assistance, and you may guess who he is."

Mr. De Manville looked at White Buffalo, as if there was something familiar in his face; but was obliged to confess that he was mystified.

"It is your own brother! It is Uncle Henri!" exclaimed Emilie.

There was no time for sentiment or explanations. The Pueblos were pouring out of their town in pursuit of the fugitives, and the yells of the Apaches could be plainly heard as they descended the bluff on the same errand. Coroa announced his intention of going to meet his people, for the purpose of turning them back.

"How will you do that?" asked Collins.

"I will tell them that they must obey me, or I will leave them, and go with the white people. They will not give up their true chief, even to please Corella. If I succeed, as I have no doubt I shall, you will not see me again, and I will give my rifle to White Buffalo. You must hasten down the canyon, for the Apaches will soon be on your track, and they can move more rapidly than you can."

Coroa's farewell was brief, but not lacking in emotion. He hastened away, and the fugitives, who had no time to indulge their feelings, made the best of their way down the canyon, urged on by the yells of the Apaches, who could not fail soon to discover the route they had taken.

The canyon was so rugged and obstructed by rocks, that the progress of the party was necessarily slow. Two of the men dismounted, and gave their horses to Emilie and her uncle; but the horses could hardly get on faster than the men could walk, and it was evident that they must soon be overtaken by the Apaches, who would leave their horses at the head of the canyon, so that they might make their way among the rocks with greater facility.

"This yar business 'll be comin' to a head afore long," said the tall trapper, "and we won't hev no time fur swappin' hosses. The red-skins hev got into the canyon, and they'll be lightin' down on us now, tol'able soon. I jest wish that those two Texas chaps hadn't got away. They'd hev foun' fur us right sharp, ef we could hev kep' 'em."

"We will have to fight," said Collins. "That much is certain."

"Yaas, and ag'in' the biggest kind of odds."

"They will have a great advantage in numbers, and we must try to get the advantage of position."

"You're right, cap'n, and I know just whar we kin git it, but we must hurry, or the 'Paches will ketch us afore we reach it."

The horses were urged forward as rapidly as possible, until the party reached a place where the walls of the canyon came together so closely as to leave a passage through which not more than two men could pass abreast.

Here they halted, and began to throw up stones for a breastwork. Emilie was sent on down the canyon, together with the horses, in charge of her uncle and one of De Manville's men, with instructions to stop at another gap, about half a mile below.

The remainder of the men, after seeing that their weapons were in order, completed the breastwork, and had the passage well blocked up when the Apaches came in sight, leaping over the rocks, and yelling like demons.

"Two at a time," said Collins, who had resumed his position as leader. "No more can work to advantage here. Not a shot must be fired until I give the word."

It was quite dark down in the canyon, and the Apaches did not see the breastwork until they were close upon it. As they were pushing through the narrow pass, huddled and jammed together, two rifles spoke, and the two foremost men fell. As those in front were forced on by their comrades in the rear, two more shots were fired, and two more bodies blocked up the pass.

The Apaches then perceived, plainly enough, that there was "a lion in the path," and all fell back, to get out of reach of the rifle-bullets, and to remove the dead warriors whose corpses stopped the advance.

"That'll do fur one dose, I reckon," said Bob Nocks. "We'd better leave one man yar, to hold 'em off a while longer, and the rest of us 'll light out for the lower pass. The Shawnee 'll be the best hand, as he is a 'nation good runner."

"Why should we leave this place?" asked Collins. "We could stop a thousand men here."

"Yaas; but there's suthin' else to be thort of, and I hain't no time fur jawin' about it now. Fur the sake of that gal, cap'n, git on!"

Blue Jim gladly accepted the position of rear-guard, and the others quietly stole away down the canyon. When the Apaches made another demonstration against the pass, a shot from the Shawnee's rifle put a stop to it, and he coolly reloaded and awaited their next movement.

His position was a sinecure during the next twenty minutes. The Apaches, believing that the pass could not be taken by assault, were meditating an attempt at strategy. They procured two large, flat pieces of stone, which two daring warriors held before them, and pushed into the pass, advancing on their hands and knees behind this movable breastwork.

When they reached the white men's fortification, no one was there, and they had only the satisfaction of sending a useless flight of arrows after Blue Jim, who was running down the canyon in the distance.

As soon as Collins and his companions arrived at the lower pass, which was near the mouth of the canyon, they set about constructing another fortification.

"It'll keep the red varmints back awhile," said the tall trapper, "till the most of us kin git out of yar."

"Why should we leave this place?" asked De Manville. "We can keep them back here as long as we wish to. When we get out in the open, we will lose all our advantage."

"So the leftenant seemed to think."

"They might starve us out; but I think they would get tired of the task before it was finished,"

"They mought do wuss'n that, cap'n. Yar's what they've done a'ready, ef this child knows anythin' about Injun natur'. As soon as they saw that we'd gone into this canyon, they sent a small party to foller us down, and all the rest hev gone around, so's to ketch us at this end of the canyon, and shet us up in a stun trap."

"Of course they have done that very thing," replied Collins. "How long before they can get round to this end?"

"That's more'n I kin say. I know that it stands us in hand to keep on the safe side, by lightin' out of yar as soon as we give 'em another dose. Thar's an old broken-down buildin' out yander, whar we kin stand 'em a tussle."

Blue Jim came inside the barricade, chuckling over the success of his rear-guard experiment, and directly after him came the Apaches, half-crazy with rage. They were received with a volley from three rifles, which checked them, and three more shots stopped their advance and sent them to cover.

According to the arrangement proposed by Bob Nocks, Jack Harber and the Shawnee were left at the barricade, to hold the Indians in check, and the others hastened toward the old ruin, with all the horses but two, which were left for the benefit of the rear-guard.

When the Apaches had recovered from their panic, they proceeded to adopt the strategy which they had tried at the first barricade, with an addition. While the flat stones were being procured, and while two warriors were pushing them toward the barricade, the other warriors kept a shower of arrows flying over the breast-work, for the purpose of hitting any of the white men who should attempt to escape.

They succeeded so well, that Jack Harber was struck by an arrow, and badly wounded, as he was running out of the canyon; but he was able to reach his horse, and to ride with Blue Jim to the ruin.

The ruin was a four-sided building, of considerable extent. It had originally been two stories in height; but the greater portion of the second story had fallen in, leaving only a small portion of the roof, supported by beams. The lower story was strong and in good condition, with slits and loopholes in the walls, but without windows. It was an excellent position for defense, as it was protected on the south side by a steep bluff, and on the west by a canyon, leaving only two sides to be guarded.

The men set at work, as soon as they reached the ruin, at clearing away the *debris*, and making platforms of the scattered stones, by which

they could use their rifles at the slits and loopholes. When the rear-guard had arrived, and the horses had all been brought in, the entrance was blocked up, and a shelter was prepared for Emilie. Collins superintended the work of fortification, and Blue Jim took his station on the remnant of the roof, to watch for the Apaches.

The warriors who had followed them down the canyon were already in sight, but had not attempted any hostile demonstration, preferring to wait for reinforcements. Soon the Shawnee reported that the other body was coming, and a large force of mounted Apaches were sweeping down from the northeast.

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed the tall trapper, as he looked out at this array. "Thar's more'n a hundred of 'em, sure, beside t'other lot. I don't see the way out of this scrape as plain as I'd like to."

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

THE two impressed guides made their escape from the employ of Bob Nocks and De Manville shortly after the party was joined by Coroa. Perhaps they thought their services were no longer needed, as another guide had arrived; perhaps they had fears of a retribution that might await them.

Corporal Williams had not proceeded far on his route down the river, when he met a company of United States volunteers, Mississippi mounted riflemen, commanded by Captain Wheeler, to whom Williams related the adventures of himself and the party with which he was connected, including the loss of Lieutenant Collins and Emilie de Manville.

"You regulars have very strict ideas of duty," said Captain Wheeler. "They are a little too strict to suit me. For my part, I would surely have gone in search of the young lady, and would not have left the country while there was a chance that my officer was living. I mean to follow them up, and to recover them if it is possible to do so. I will give you an escort of five men to take your wagons to Santa Fe, and you may come with me, to show me where those people left the river, if it is consistent with your ideas of duty."

Williams hesitated. It was *not* in accordance with the regulations; but his affection for Lieutenant Collins for once overcame his devotion to duty, and he consented to accompany the volunteers.

They left the river at the place where De Manville and his party had turned off, and followed their trail. As it was quite plain, and as two experienced mountain-men accompanied Wheeler as guides, they got on pretty rapidly; but the approach of night soon compelled them to camp.

Early the next morning the scouts who were riding in advance reported two mounted men coming from the north. As it was impossible to decide, at that distance, whether they were white men or Indians, it was thought best to make arrangements for their capture, whoever they might be, and a portion of the command spread out to the right and left for the purpose of surrounding them.

The two men were Sandy Bill and his "pard,"

who, perceiving that they were fairly flanked, made no attempt to escape, but professed themselves overjoyed at meeting Wheeler and his command. When they saw Williams, however, their countenances underwent a change.

The corporal told Captain Wheeler who they were, and of the part they were suspected of having played in the abduction of Miss De Manville. The officer believing that if he should ask them no questions they would tell him no lies, simply ordered them to accompany his command.

When the Mississippians came in sight of the bluff on which the Apache village was situated, Sandy Bill volunteered the information that Indians were close at hand, and Captain Wheeler thought it best to halt and conceal his men, until the scouts could go forward and try to ascertain the whereabouts of De Manville and his party.

The scouts followed the trail across the stream and in the direction of the big canyon, until the darkness of the night compelled them to abandon it. They then prowled about, hoping to gain some intelligence, until long after midnight, when the yelling of Indians and the firing of guns told them that an engagement of some sort was going on in that vicinity. They hastened back to camp, and reported the occurrence to Captain Wheeler.

In a few moments the volunteers had saddled and mounted their horses, and were on their way to the scene of action. Just as day dawned, they came in sight of a ruined building, as the guides reported it to be, toward which several men and one woman were making their way, four on horseback, and two on foot.

Concluding that he had better await further developments, Wheeler drew up his men in the shadow of a bluff, where he could see what took place on the plain. He next saw two mounted men ride at full speed to the ruins and enter it. After them came a number of Indians on foot, who halted just out of gunshot of the ruin.

Yells and whoops told that "some more of the same sort" were coming, and soon a large body of Apaches came in sight, mounted and fully armed. They joined their comrades at the ruin, and made an attack upon it from two sides. Rifle-shots rung out from the old walls, and some of them fell; but they pressed on as if determined to carry the position by assault.

"Now is our time," said Wheeler. "Look to your rifles, boys. Let those two Texas men keep in the center."

The Mississippians swept down the slope at a gallop, spreading out into line as they went.

When within easy range they treated the astonished Apaches to a volley from their rifles. Then they drew their revolvers, and dashed on with a ringing cheer.

The Apaches scattered, and fled like sheep. The deadly rifles of the Mississippians had demoralized them, and the revolver-charge completed the panic. The volunteers rode straight on over the ground, shooting those who had not got out of the way, and halted under the walls of the ruin, while its defenders came out and greeted them most joyfully. Corporal Williams was as much astonished as rejoiced at finding his officer alive, and the two Texans looked at each other expressively, when they saw Emilie

Manville.

But the Apaches, although discomfited, were not defeated. As they still largely outnumbered their foes, they resolved to make another effort for victory. They were rallied by Gutierrez and the chiefs, and again pressed on toward the ruin, sheltering themselves as well as they could, and keeping up a continual fire.

"I'll tell you what it is, Sam," said Sandy Bill to his "pard;" "we two are bound to be rubbed out yar, either by the white folks or the reds, and we had better die like men."

"Yaas, I reckon," was the reply of stupid Sam Hinks.

"Fur my part, I'm goin' fur that cussed Greaser. Come along, if you want a chance."

They crept over the broken ground, until they were within a few yards of the Apaches. As they passed from the shelter of a pile of stones to that of a large rock, Sandy Bill was struck by two arrows, and fell. Sam Hinks carried him on to the rock, where he laid him on the ground, and bent over him tenderly.

"I'm goin', old pard," said Bill, faintly. "I wish you'd do one thing fur me. Jest hit 'em, once't, afore I go."

"I'll do it!" exclaimed Hinks, as he jumped up and dashed away a tear with the back of his rough hand. Then he rushed like a madman among the Apaches, clubbing his rifle after he had fired it into the thick of them.

He broke his gun over the head of a stout warrior, and closed in with Gutierrez, who was next in his path. In a moment his knife was buried in the heart of the chief, and he himself fell, covered with wounds.

The wailing of the Indians told that some person of importance had fallen, and the white men took advantage of the opportunity to charge them with all their force. The charge was completely successful, scattering them in all directions. All who were on foot were overtaken and slain remorselessly; but the speed of their horses enabled most of the mounted men to escape.

The peril was over, and it only remained for the white men to bury their dead, and take care of their wounded—less than a dozen, all told. The task finished, and the wants of their inner men having been duly attended to, litters were prepared for the wounded, and the united parties returned to the river, reaching in safety the camp where we first met Collins and his men.

Mr. De Manville's wagons were drawn out and reloaded with the contents of his caches, and the journey to Santa Fe was accomplished without any difficulty.

At Santa Fe there was a separation, De Manville and Emilie going on to Louisiana, and Wheeler and his men being sent down into the Rio Abajo.

Henri de Manville could not be persuaded to accompany his brother, being determined to remain in that region as long as there was a chance of obtaining intelligence concerning his lost child.

Lieutenant Collins, however, obtained leave of absence, with permission to escort the travelers to Louisiana. He employed his time so well on the way, that he did not return to New Mexico, Mr. De Manville giving him permission to marry Emilie, on condition that he would resign his commission in the army.

THE END.

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